



ROYAL CASTLES OF ENGLAND

WORKS OF
HENRY C. SHELLEY



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RAGLAN CASTLE. (*See page 236.*)

Royal Castles of England

Comprising an account of those ancient Fortresses
which from the days of William the Conqueror
either were the Homes of English Sov-
ereigns or have been intimately asso-
ciated with the History and
Romance of their lives

By

Henry C. Shelley

Author of "Inns and Taverns of Old
London," "Old Paris," etc.

Illustrated



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PREFACE

NONE of the ancient buildings of England, neither its venerable village churches with their moving memorials of bygone rural life, nor its historic cathedrals with their resplendent tombs of "ladies dead and lovely knights," can for a moment vie in interest with those stately castles which have been associated with the loves and hates, the triumphs and defeats of the sovereigns of that land. A few of the most notable of those feudal fortresses have been razed to the ground, or have left no other vestige of their presence than those shapeless heaps over which nature is wont to cast her green mantle of kindly oblivion; but a great number have survived the iconoclasm of man and the ravages of time, and it is the purpose of the ensuing pages to conduct the reader on a pilgrimage to those haunts of vanished greatness. The story touches the whole gamut of human emotion: love, the love of a man for a maid; parental affection, which sways the royal as well as the plebeian heart; illicit passion, against which a crown is no talisman; pride of power; thirst of glory; the effulgence of a throne; the gloom of a prison; the poison or lethal blade of

the assassin; the final horror of the headsman's axe — all the shows and shadows of regal life find their image here.

For the purpose of classification a geographical rather than a chronological arrangement has been adopted, the latter being manifestly impossible owing to the fact that the traditions of a given castle are not confined to any one monarch; and even in the topographical division of England into southern, midland, and northern districts it is a general view of the map which has been kept in mind.

Naturally no attempt has been made to include London and its immediate neighbourhood; the royal, prelatial, and baronial castles and palaces of the English capital were so numerous and important that they necessarily demand separate treatment; hence those historic buildings will be the subject of a subsequent volume bearing the title of "The Castles and Palaces of Old London."

H. C. S.

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I
SOUTHERN ENGLAND

ROYAL CASTLES OF ENGLAND

CHAPTER I

THE GUARDIAN OF ALBION'S WHITE WALLS *DOVER CASTLE*

NATURALISTS tell us there are some moths whose lightly-coloured wings are their undoing, attracting the onslaughts of predatory birds. In the same fashion the white cliffs of the English shore in the vicinity of Dover appear to have been a deciding factor in Julius Cæsar's first invasion of ancient Britain. Having subdued all Gaul, the Roman general at last reached the French coast somewhere in the neighbourhood of Calais, and from thence the "cliffy downs" of the opposite island lured him across the English Channel to new conquests. That was nigh two thousand years ago, for it was in the fifty-fifth year before the Christian era that

"Cæsar out of war-worn France
Victorious troops did bring."

Even then, however, that valley cleft in the Kentish coast was at once recognized by the Roman

soldier as a vulnerable point in the white walls of Albion. For the objective of Cæsar when he sailed from France was that spot on the further shore which, in later ages, was to be called "the Key of England." And the rude natives of that land were conscious of that fact, for when the Roman general drew near to the shore he found that the lofty cliffs to the east and west of that ravine were alive with armed men ready to contest his landing.

Many years later, when other Roman generals had recognized that this stretch of the English coast invited attack and called for defence, it was on the easternmost of those two cliffs was erected one of those citadels designed to repel the assaults of the Saxon pirates. All traces of that Roman fortress have long disappeared from the castle heights of Dover, but there still survive considerable remains of a structure which links that historic spot with the far-off era of the Roman conquest of Britain.

As the nearest point to the mainland on the opposite side of the English Channel the haven at Dover would naturally be most used by the Roman galleys passing to and fro, and for their guidance at night beacon-towers were erected on both the French and the English coast. Hence the *Tour d'Odre* near Boulogne, the building of which about the year 45 is attributed to Caligula, and hence, too, the Pharos which was reared on the Dover heights as the com-



DOVER CASTLE.

plementary lighthouse on the further side of the narrow seas. The *Tour d'Odre* has vanished, but the Pharos of Dover still exists. Not, of course, in its entirety; during the many centuries which have passed since its erection much of the original structure has disappeared or been encased by more modern work; but the basement survives as an indubitable fragment of Roman days. It stands at the western end of the venerable Church of St. Mary, that temple of the Christian faith which is believed to date from the fourth century and is thus one of the oldest religious structures on English soil.

A legend of the middle of the eleventh century gives us our first glimpse of the Castle of Dover. For some object, on which no definite information is forthcoming, Harold, the potent Earl of Wessex and the aspirant to the crown of Edward the Confessor, resolved to pay a visit to Normandy, the domain of that Duke William to whom Edward is said to have promised the reversion of his throne. During that journey Harold accompanied William on a warlike expedition, and, one day, as the two were riding side by side, the Norman duke recalled his youthful friendship with the English king. "Edward and I," he said, "lived under the same roof, like two brothers; he promised me if ever he became king of England, to make me heir to his kingdom; Harold, if thou wouldst aid me in real-

izing this promise, be sure that, if I obtain the kingdom, whatever thou asketh thou shalt have." Taken off his guard for the moment, Harold expressed his willingness to assist the Norman duke in attaining his ambition, whereupon Duke William continued: "Since thou consentest to serve me, thou must engage to fortify Dover Castle, to dig a well of fresh water there, and deliver it up, when the time comes, to my people." To this, too, as the old story goes, Harold also agreed, and was later, ere he returned to England, lured into taking a solemn oath on his promise.

But, as history has recorded, Harold had no intention of keeping his vow. The sequel is well known. When Edward died, Harold took the English crown for himself. Then came the battle of Hastings, the overthrow of the English, the death of Harold on the battle-field, and the conquest of the land by William of Normandy. And it was a few days after the battle of Hastings that the Castle of Dover makes another fleeting appearance in the early annals of Albion. Having rested and reformed his army, the Norman duke marched on Dover, "the strongest fortress on the whole coast, and of which he had formerly endeavoured to make himself master, without danger and without fighting, by the oath into which he had entrapped Harold. Dover Castle, recently completed by the son of Godwin for better purposes, was constructed on a

rock bathed by the sea, naturally steep, and which, with great difficulty and labour, had been hewn on every side, so as to make it present the appearance of a vast wall. The details of the siege made by the Normans," continues Augustin Thierry, "are not known; all the historians tell us is, that the town of Dover was fired, and that, either from terror or treason, the garrison of the fortress surrendered it." Recognizing, as the Romans had done, the strength of this site on the summit of the eastern cliff, the Norman conqueror gave orders for the erection of additional walls and defensive works ere he resumed his march into the interior of the country.

From this date, that is, 1066, the historian of Dover Castle is on sure ground. Exactly what form the Roman fortress took, or how the original citadel was modified by the Anglo-Saxons, are matters on which the learned in such lore are not agreed; but there is a consensus of opinion that the wide encircling walls, the sturdy watch-towers, and the massive keep which still crown the eastern heights belong almost entirely to the Norman period. Not that they were all built during the reign of William the Conqueror; the keep, for example, is believed to have been erected by Henry II about the year 1154; but the plan of the fortress is thought to be practically the same as that decided upon shortly after the battle of Hastings.

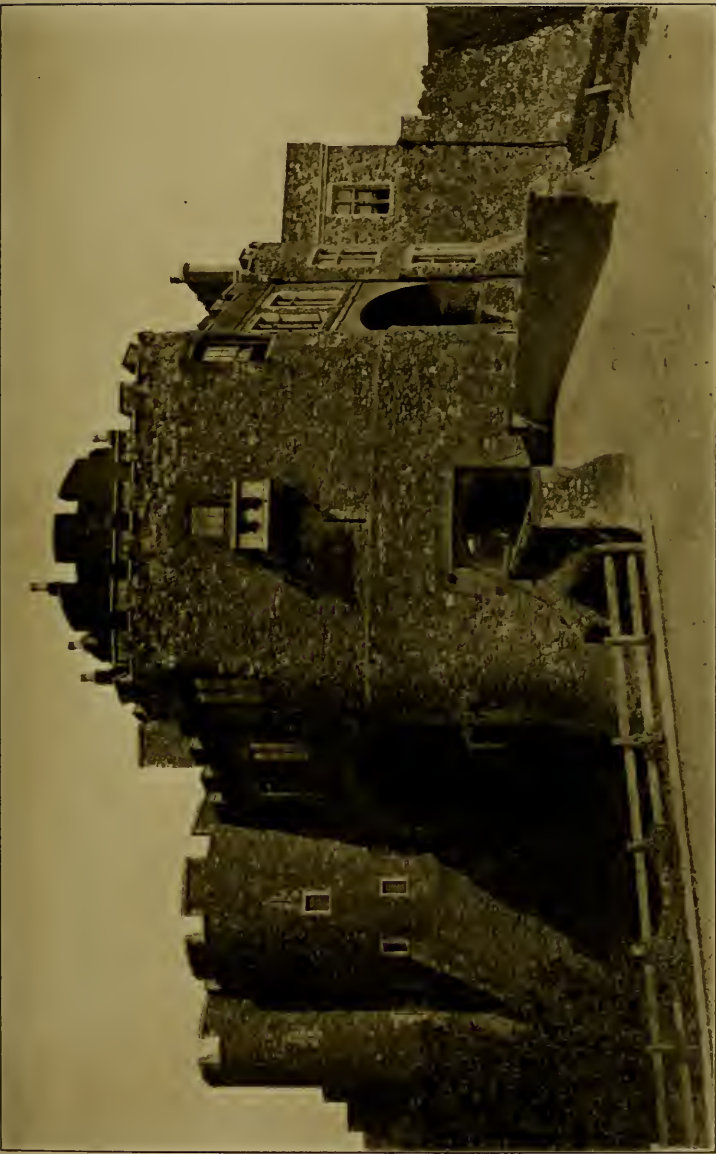
A few years later, when he had time to turn his attention to the organization of his new kingdom, William the Conqueror framed a kind of constitution for the government of Dover Castle. The charge of the fortress was committed to a constable, with whom was associated a confederacy of eight knights. Some such scheme was rendered necessary by the fact that there was no standing army in those early days. Hence the upkeep and defence of the castle became a charge on the land. That is to say, the constable was granted a large estate to enable him to provide a certain number of men, and the knights associated with him were also endowed with sufficient land to defray their expenses in providing the soldiers for whom they were responsible. For many years, too, the constable of Dover Castle had unlimited power over the possessions of those who lived in the adjacent town or in the surrounding district. In other words, whatever the constable needed in the form of hay, corn, straw, or provisions, he demanded of the citizens of Dover or the farmers of the neighbourhood. This became an intolerable burden, especially on the occasion of royal visits, and, at length, the lieges protested so vehemently that, in the reign of Henry III, an edict was issued forbidding the constable to seize the goods of any man without paying for them. Years later, however, the order was so little respected that Archbishop Boniface had to threaten some knights of

the castle with all kinds of ecclesiastical penalties before they would restore the horses, wagons and fodder which they had seized from some Kentish yeomen.

Although from the date of the Norman Conquest the Castle of Dover became one of the chief strongholds of the kingdom and must have often been visited by the monarchs of the land when they crossed to or returned from France, the records of such early royal associations are exceedingly fragmentary. Of the twelfth century, for example, the annals of the fortress record but two such visits, one by Henry II, when he assembled his army at Dover prior to his seizure of Nantes, and another by Richard Cœur de Lion on the eve of his departure for the Crusades. Such is the conventional account, but it is hardly accurate so far as Henry II is concerned, for the elaborate itinerary of the movements of that king compiled by R. W. Eyton shows that he was frequently at Dover, his visits ranging in date from 1156 to 1187. Two years later Richard of the Lionheart succeeded to the throne, and no sooner had he been crowned than he began to prepare for his conquest of the Holy Land. He offered for sale, the chroniclers declare, everything he had, castles, farms, manors, earldoms, and benefices. "I would sell London itself," he declared, "could I find a purchaser rich enough." And then he journeyed to his Castle of Dover to superintend the prepara-

tion of that fleet of nearly two hundred vessels which were to carry his army over the seas.

For two or three centuries, indeed, the royal associations of Dover Castle are chiefly of a warlike nature. As one of the principal fortresses of the kingdom its possession counted for a good deal in the frequent struggles between the sovereign and his turbulent lords. Sometimes it was held for the king, sometimes for the barons. During the closing stages of the quarrel between King John and the nobles who had forced him to sign Magna Charta, it so happened that the Castle of Dover was one of the few strongholds which remained loyal to the crown, the constable of the time being Sir Hubert de Burgh. It was at this period that the English nobles, disgusted with the treachery of their own king, invited Louis, the Dauphin of France, to cross into England and become their sovereign. Flattered by the offer, Louis promptly put in an appearance among his prospective subjects, only to discover that several formidable obstacles lay between him and the English crown. One of those obstacles being Dover Castle, he addressed himself to the reduction of that fortress, which he so closely invested that it was in imminent danger of capture. At length the garrison became so greatly diminished in numbers that the survivors pleaded with Sir Hubert de Burgh to surrender. But at that juncture King John sent Sir Stephen de Pencestre to



THE ENTRANCE GATEWAY, DOVER CASTLE.

the relief of the castle, and as that gallant soldier was able to outwit the Dauphin and throw some four hundred men into the stronghold, it was not long ere the French besiegers were compelled to retire. And, before they could return, the defences had been so strengthened that the Dauphin deemed it wiser not to venture on another attack.

During the reigns of the three Edwards — a period of more than a hundred years — the Castle of Dover was honoured by many royal visits, but, in the main, they were associated with warlike expeditions to the Continent or were temporary sojourns connected with the arrival of royal brides. The most notable association with Edward II credits him with having signed within these walls the recall of his contemptible favourite Gaveston, to whom also he committed for the term of his absence in France the guardianship of the kingdom with full power to fill up ecclesiastical offices in the king's name. On that occasion Edward II seems to have spent more than a month in the castle, but little is recorded of his doings save that reinstatement of his favourite which led to such disastrous results.

Notwithstanding the importance of the castle as the guardian of the white walls of England, or, perhaps, because of that fact, it is not until we reach the sixteenth century that its history is touched with the light and colour of romance. So long as it was a fortress more than a palace its annals were practi-

cally barren of those incidents which constitute the chief attraction of such ancient buildings. Strangely enough, the Wars of the Roses did not add to the legends of the castle, and even the king who united the Lancastrians and Yorkists and was the founder of the Tudor dynasty, Henry VII, makes but a shadowy figure in the history of the stronghold. There is, however, one record of a visit he paid at the beginning of the sixteenth century which affords a welcome proof that he was not always of so grasping a disposition as the historians affirm. This document is a letter "given under our signet at our Castle of Dover," and is concerned with a claim which had been made of a knight named Richard Bulkeley. As a yeoman of the Crown Bulkeley was under obligation either to accompany his king on his recent voyage to France or contribute ten pounds towards his expenses. He elected the former alternative, but as he was paid certain wages for his services the guardians of the royal exchequer made a claim for the ten pounds. Bulkeley appealed to the king, who, for once, took a generous view of the case. "We," he wrote to his officials, "considering that as well by great rage of fire as other unfortunate chances, he hath sustained, as he says, right great loss, desire and pray you to inquire whether he be able to pay the said money or is fallen into such poverty as is above surmised. And if the same surmise be true that then ye cer-

tify us thereof, and in the meantime see that he be not distressed or troubled for the nonpayment of the said ten pounds." Whether Bulkeley finally escaped the payment of that ten pounds does not appear, but it is pleasant to remember that the last association of Henry VII with Dover Castle presents him in so favourable a light.

At no period during its long history was the Kentish fortress the scene of so many distinguished royal visits as in the reign of Henry VIII. Four years after he came to the throne he was at war with France, and it was at Dover he assembled that redoubtable army with which he fought and won the Battle of the Spurs. A little more than a year later, however, he was again at the castle on a more peaceable mission. In the shuffling of the statecraft of the time the enmity between Henry and Louis XII of France had given place to friendship, and it so happened that at this juncture the King of France was in need of another wife. Now, a suitable candidate was available in the person of Mary Tudor, the daughter of Henry VII and the sister of Henry VIII. It is true she had been betrothed to Charles of Castile, but that prince and his friends had proved so treacherous that Mary's brother was quite willing to ignore the contract with Charles and use her as a pawn in his political game. Born in March, 1496, she had reached her eighteenth year and had blossomed into a woman of surpassing

beauty, when her matrimonial future underwent this sudden change. As a girl of eleven, indeed, Mary Tudor had been eulogized for her "splendid beauty" and for the "modesty and gravity with which she bore herself, and the laudable and princely gestures discerned in her." By this time, the summer of 1514, she had grown tall and graceful, and a portrait of her which had been sent to the French king did such justice to her charms that that monarch speedily accepted Henry's offer of her hand. Louis, it is true, was in his fifty-second year, and a physical wreck, but such defects were of no moment in the royal matrimonial contracts of the sixteenth century.

Mary herself, too, was so well schooled in the hard fate of princesses that she accepted her destiny with equanimity. She was already in love with Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, the favourite of her royal brother, and it was of him she was thinking when she agreed to marry the French king on the condition that if she survived him she should be allowed to make her own choice of a second husband. Meantime, such was her gentle disposition, she wrote several letters to her prospective husband, using such expressions as a woman might to a man she really loved. "I assure you, my lord," she wrote, "that the thing which I now most desire and wish is to hear good news of your health and prosperity;" and in a second letter she expressed

her "singular desire" to "see you and to be in your company."

Louis wrote several times to urge the speedy journey of his lovely bride. He was as eager and as full of promises as a lover of twenty. To an English nobleman, who happened to be at his court while the negotiations were in progress, he affirmed that "there should be never man or woman about his wife but such as should be at her contentment and pleasure;" and he favoured the same peer with a kind of private view of the jewels he had selected for the adornment of his bride. "He showed me," wrote this chronicler, "the goodliest and richest sight of jewels that ere I saw. I would never have believed it if I had not seen it; for I assure you all that ever I have seen is not to compare to fifty-six great pieces that I saw of diamonds and rubies, and seven of the greatest pearls that I have seen, besides a great number of other goodly diamonds, rubies, and great pearls; and the worst of the second sort of stones be priced and cost two thousand ducats. There are ten or twelve of the principal stones that there hath been refused for one of them one hundred thousand ducats. And when he had showed me all, he said that all should be for his wife. And another coffer also was there that was full of goodly girdles, collars, chains, bracelets, beads of gold, and other diverse goodly jewels; but merrily laughing he said, 'My wife

shall not have all at once, but at divers times; ' for he would have many and at divers times kisses and thanks for them. I assure you he thinketh every hour a day till he see her; he is never well but when hearing speak of her. I make no doubt but she shall have a good life with him, by the grace of God."

At last Mary Tudor set out on the journey which was to make her the possessor of all these rare jewels. Her brother, the king, who was accompanied by Catherine of Aragon and the English court, escorted her to Dover, and the whole company was lodged in the castle pending the final arrangements for the young bride's departure. She was carrying with her so large a retinue of lords and ladies and servants and such a huge wardrobe and store of other plenishings that no fewer than fourteen vessels had to be requisitioned for the crossing of the Channel. It was towards the end of September that the distinguished company arrived at the castle, but as " the winde was troublous and the wether fowle " Mary could not at once depart for her new home. Day after day, indeed, went by and still her voyage was delayed. From the towers of the castle strict watch was kept for a change in the wind, and at last, at four o'clock in the morning of the second of October, the storm abated. Such an opportunity was too precious to be lost, so, although the hour was abnormally early, the young princess was aroused from her sleep to start on her

voyage. The king also arose and accompanied his sister to the shore, an incident which is immortalized in that stained glass window of the church in Bury St. Edmund's where Mary Tudor was laid to rest.

But the promise of that early start from Dover bay was not fulfilled. Hardly had the fleet of the fair young bride sailed half a dozen miles from the shore than the wind began to blow again with terrific force and the vessels were scattered in all directions. One of them, the *Lubeck*, which ranked among the largest ships in Henry's navy, was driven ashore near Calais and wrecked with the loss of many lives. Mary's vessel was with difficulty steered in the direction of Boulogne, but as it was impossible to make the harbour there the pilot ran the ship ashore as the safest course. As the land, however, was still some distance off, a boat was lowered and the princess rowed towards the breakers. That point reached, one of her courtiers jumped into the sea and carried her ashore in his arms. Seven days later Mary became Queen of France, but in eighty-two days she was a widow and free to make her own choice of a new husband.

When Henry VIII next visited Dover Castle it was to welcome the very man to whom his sister Mary had been betrothed prior to her marriage to the French king! By now, however, the Prince of Castile had become the Emperor Charles V, and it

suited the English monarch's purpose to receive him into his kingdom as an honoured guest. This was at the end of May, 1520, on the eve of the Field of the Cloth of Gold. Alarmed at what might be portended by the approaching interview between Henry of England and Francis of France, Charles arranged to visit his English cousin in his own country. So he crossed to Dover on the 26th of May, and was received in the castle with fitting ceremony. Henry was at Canterbury, but on learning of the emperor's arrival he at once rode off to Dover to welcome him in person. A few days later it was from his castle here that he started for that memorable meeting with Francis I on the Field of the Cloth of Gold. Seeing that Henry's retinue on that occasion numbered more than four thousand five hundred persons, and that the attendants of his queen added more than a thousand to that total, it is obvious that the town and Castle of Dover must have presented an animated scene during the early summer of 1520.

Few save the court officials and the custodians of the castle were aware of the visit of Charles V; he came almost as a thief in the night, and was gone again in a few days. But two years later Charles paid another visit to the English king, whom he was anxious to secure as his ally in a war with France. This interchange of kingly hospitality resulted in what has been described as "the most splendid

royal visit ever paid to England." That it developed into such a gorgeous occasion seems to have been due to Charles's own preparations. In accordance with the regal etiquette of the time, he forwarded to Henry a list of the attendants by whom he was to be accompanied, and when it was found that this list embraced more than two thousand names the English king realized that his own arrangements would have to be on a far greater scale than he had anticipated.

Certain noblemen were duly commissioned to meet the emperor at Gravelines and Calais, the latter town being then an English possession; but the most elaborate of Henry's instructions were those which related to the preparations to be made in England itself. As the port at which Charles would arrive, Dover came first on the list, and it was arranged that Cardinal Wolsey with numerous prelates and noblemen should be waiting there to welcome the visitor in the name of the king. The town of Dover, so ran the royal commands, was to be "plenteously provided and furnished with all manner victuals for horse and man," and sufficient carriages were to be forthcoming to convey the emperor's "stuff and baggage" on the next stage of his journey. Still more explicit were the orders for the preparation of his abode. "Item," so reads the old document, "that the Castle be prepared, garnished, and ordered, for his lodging, with furni-

ture of apparel, beds, victuals, and all things necessary for his honourable entertainment; and to the intent the said preparations may be sufficiently furnished, it is thought expedient, that the Controller of the King's household, with such other officers of the household as shall be thought necessary, shall see the provision there to be made for that purpose."

It was, in fact, a busy time for Henry's officials. Details pieced together from other documents of the period give an animated picture of the hurry and scurry of the preparations. That Dover Castle might be equipped with sufficient sleeping accommodation for the emperor and his train, the stores of the English king in his palace at Richmond, his Tower of London, and various other residences were pressed into service and transported to the coast. Here is an item which shows how three contractors were paid thirty pounds to carry ale and beer to Dover; there is an entry telling of other payments for the provision of various "dainties" and fish and torches and "necessaries for kitchen and all other offices;" elsewhere full details are given of how the merchants' warehouses and the taverns of London were ransacked to insure a copious supply of Gascon and Rhenish wine. One anxious official was in doubt as to whether Charles was expected to use his own linen and silver for table service, to be answered that as soon as he arrived

at Dover he, as the guest of the king, was to be provided with Henry's own linen and silver.

Much care, too, had been bestowed upon the time when and the place where the two monarchs were to meet. Wolsey, as has been noted, was deputed to greet Charles on his landing, and escort him to the castle; and the following day Henry was to "encounter and meet with the said emperor upon the downs between Dover and Canterbury." That he might be in time to carry out his part of the programme, Henry arrived at Canterbury on the 27th of May, only to be greeted, however, with the news that his distinguished guest had already landed in his kingdom. For Charles was a day ahead of his time-table, having set out from Calais on the 26th of May and reached Dover at four o'clock the same afternoon. Happily Wolsey was already in attendance there, with a large retinue of earls and knights and prelates and yeomen, so that when the emperor stepped ashore nothing was lacking in the cordiality or pomp of his welcome. As soon as the monarch and cardinal had embraced, Charles took Wolsey by the arm and walked towards the waiting horses, on which they rode up to the castle.

Owing to some delay in the arrival of the emperor's baggage and many of his nobles, it soon became obvious that he would have to remain at Dover several days, whereupon Wolsey sent a messenger to Henry suggesting that he should join the

emperor in the castle. To this the English king agreed, but in bidding the cardinal prepare for his accommodation in the castle he charged him to keep his coming a secret, "to the intent that it may appear to the emperor that his coming was of his own mind and affection to the emperor." His command was obeyed, and it is to be hoped that Charles was duly pleased with the unexpected arrival of his host. It was not until three days later that the two monarchs were able to set out on their progress toward the capital, but how they amused themselves, save for an inspection of Henry's famous new ship, the *Harry Grace a Dieu*, does not transpire. One unhappy hour was in store for Charles V, for when he reached London he met there, radiant in her beauty, the Mary Tudor whom he might have married. Now she was the happy wife of an English noble, and the thought of what he had missed so moved the emperor that at a court ball given in his honour he refused to dance and "sat the whole evening silently and moodily apart."

Two other notable episodes in the career of Henry VIII have left their impress on the annals of Dover Castle. The first belongs to the fall of 1532, when, although scarcely free from his matrimonial obligations to Catherine of Aragon, the uxorious monarch had succumbed to the charms of Anne Boleyn. His marital affairs, indeed, were in a sad

tangle; the divorce from Catherine had not been definitely decided, yet he was so much in the company of Anne Boleyn that the Pope had thrice warned him of the error of his ways. At this juncture he resolved to demonstrate to the head of the Church that he was not without friends among the sovereigns of the day, and to that end he arranged an interview with the King of France at Calais. Of course he took Dover Castle on his journey going and coming, and, as though in defiance of papal interference, he carried with him the lady who was the cause of all the trouble. This was not Anne Boleyn's first visit to Dover Castle, for she had been among the attendants who were in the train of Mary Tudor eighteen years previous. Time had indeed wrought a change, for now she came as a king's mistress and was on the high road to sharing his throne. Most of the old records are concerned with Henry's doings on the further side of the channel, but brief entries here and there show how he "took ship with the lady Anne Boleyn," how "what she would have done was shortly finished," and how when the couple came back to the castle the infatuated king was sufficiently mindful of his religious duties to make an offering of four shillings and eight pence to "our lady in the Rocke at Dover," that is, to the Church of St. Mary within the castle precincts.

Seven years later another prospective bride of

the much-marrying Henry was received as an honoured guest within the walls of Dover Castle. During the interval merciful death had ended the sorrows of Catherine of Aragon, and the headsman's sword had cut short the career of Anne Boleyn. To these had succeeded the gentle Jane Seymour, and she, too, had passed away in childbirth. And so it had befallen that by the late autumn of 1537 Henry VIII was once more in need of a wife. At first his thoughts turned to the court of France, and he must have been highly flattered when Francis I assured him that there was not a lady of any degree in his dominions who should not be at his disposal. But when Henry suggested that Francis should meet him at Calais with a bevy of his beauties for him to choose from, the French king wrote that it was "impossible to bring ladies of noble blood to market, as horses are trotted out at a fair." And, in the end, the royal candidate for a fourth wife was persuaded to think favourably of Anne of Cleves.

That this lady could not speak any language save her own, that she could not sing or play any instrument, that her only accomplishment was a housewifely skill in needlework, did not deter Henry from agreeing to make her his wife. He had fallen in love with a portrait. For Holbein had been commissioned to paint the lady's likeness, and his miniature, set in a carved ivory box, was so satisfactory



THE CHURCH AND PHAROS, DOVER CASTLE.

that Henry speedily completed the treaty for the marriage.

As soon as she reached Calais on her journey from Dusseldorf to England the "most noble Princess the Lady Anne of Cleves" enjoyed a right royal greeting, and careful arrangements were made for her welcome on the other side of the channel. "It is ordained," said a state paper of the period, "that at her grace's arrival at Dover, the duke of Suffolk, and lord warden of the cinque ports, with such other lords as be appointed to wait upon them, and the duchess of Suffolk, with such other ladies as be appointed to wait upon her, shall receive her at her landing, and so convey her to the castle, where her lodgings shall be prepared; and, giving their continual attendance upon her during her grace's abode there, shall, at her grace's departure from thence, conduct her to Canterbury, and so further till her meeting with the king's highness." That programme was duly observed, and the unfortunate Anne made her first and last acquaintance with the interior of Dover Castle, taking a brief rest there prior to starting for that meeting with her bridegroom-elect which was to prove how startling was the difference between Holbein's portrait and its original. To Henry she was no more attractive than a "great Flanders mare," and although he went through with the marriage he got it annulled with as little delay as possible.

Although Queen Elizabeth spent so much of her time in making progresses to and fro in her kingdom, she does not seem to have paid more than one visit to Dover Castle. And the records of that visit are exceedingly scanty. Judging, however, from a letter written by Lord Burghley, it would appear as though the queen and her courtiers expected to have a good time in the Kentish stronghold. Writing in August, 1573, to one of his friends, Elizabeth's chief minister told how the queen had had "a hard beginning of a progress in the Weald of Kent," adding, "now we are bending to Rye, and so afterwards to Dover, where we shall have amends." Perhaps he was thinking of the "sweetmeats, fruits, etc.," which my Lord Cobham had provided against his sovereign's arrival at the castle. It was on a late August day that the Virgin Queen reached the downs above Folkestone, where she was awaited by the Archbishop of Canterbury and innumerable knights, who conducted her in great state to the castle, her advent being announced by the ringing of bells and the firing of cannon. Among other arrangements for the occasion, the corporation of Sandwich sent a special guard of a hundred armed men to attend her majesty as long as she remained in the castle.

For more than half a century after that date no new royal association was added to the annals of Dover. Indeed it seems to have been neglected even

as a fortress, for five years after Elizabeth's visit the castle was reported to be "altogether unfurnished" in gunpowder and arms. This neglect was continued in the following century, until, in 1624, the House of Lords ordered a thousand pounds to be expended upon the repair of the building. That renovation was effected in the nick of time, as it was on a June Sunday evening of the next year that the castle once more received a royal guest. This was Henrietta Maria, the fair daughter of Henry IV of France, who was on her way to become the bride of Charles I of England. The young king was awaiting his bride at Canterbury, but on hearing of her arrival he determined to ride over to greet her the next day. So in the morning, at ten o'clock, while Henrietta was at her breakfast, the eager bridegroom arrived. "The young queen," wrote a news-gatherer of the time, "hasted down a pair of steps to meet the king, and then offered to kneel and kiss his hand; but he wrapt her in his arms, with many kisses." She had prepared a set speech for the occasion, "Sire, I am come into your majesty's country to be at your command," but her emotion overcame her when she had got thus far, and further confession of obedience was rendered unnecessary by Charles's declaration that he would be no longer master of himself save as her servant. And when, surprised that his bride was taller than he had expected, Charles

looked down at her feet to see whether her height had not been increased by artificial means, she, divining his thought, answered the suspicion with, "Sire, I stand upon mine own feet: I have not help from art. Thus high I am; neither higher nor lower." A pretty scene, truly, the brightest perhaps of all those witnessed at royal gatherings within those sturdy walls.

Another meeting graced by beautiful women forms practically the last chapter in the royal annals of Dover Castle. Forty-five years had passed, and Henrietta's son Charles was now king of England. His friends on the continent were distressed at his lukewarmness in the Catholic faith, and his much-loved sister, Henrietta, now Duchess of Orleans, had undertaken to secure his assent to a treaty which was aimed at the ruin of the new faith. So Henrietta came to her brother in Dover Castle, which had been specially fitted up for her reception, and in her train, thanks to the artifice of Louis XIV, who knew the weakness of Charles II for a pretty face, was the lovely Louise de Keroualle. The English king promptly fell into the trap, and in six days, owing to the eloquence of Henrietta and the blandishments of Louise, the treaty was signed. On the eve of his sister's return Charles, pointing to the fascinating Louise, begged her to leave him one of her jewels as a token of affection. To have consented at once would have been too clear a reve-

lation of the plot, but it was not long ere Louise returned to become the mistress of the Merry Monarch. That the two should have first met, within such a warlike stronghold as Dover Castle will furnish another parable for the moralist and might be cited as a gloss on the old story of Samson and Delilah.

CHAPTER II

THE HOME OF ANNE BOLEYN *HEVER CASTLE*

MANY a visitor to the romantic ruins of past generations must often have sighed for the possession of unlimited wealth. What could be more delightful, he thinks, than to have the means to acquire for his own one of those picturesque buildings, restore it to the aspect it bore in the days when it was the home of some famous historical person, and spend the rest of his days amid such fascinating surroundings? There have been cases in which this sentiment has been fortified by command of an unlimited bank account, for in recent times not a few of the historic castles of England have been redeemed from ruin to become lordly habitations once more. A notable illustration of this transformation is provided in the case of Hever Castle, that stately mansion in a retired and beautiful corner of Kent which William Waldorf Astor has rescued from decay and restored to a lovely country home.

Quite apart from its associations with the romance and tragedy of Anne Boleyn, this stately building was worthy of its good fortune. Standing in a charming nook of the county which claims the



HEVER CASTLE.

proud title of "the garden of England," set in an undulating countryside rich in grassy meadows and wooded groves, and encircled by the placid waters of the River Eden, Hever Castle, with its ancient moat, its noble entrance gateway, its oriel windows, its embattled walls, its spacious courtyard, its old-world gardens, did indeed deserve to be rescued from the ravages of the eroding hand of time. Although parts of the building are suggestive of the architecture of the reign of Edward III, the structure as a whole is a splendid specimen of the castelated mansion of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, with here and there, as in the portcullis grooves and the arrow slits of the walls, a suggestion of those turbulent days when a baron's castle needed to be something more than a home.

Yet it is highly probable that the memories rather than the beauties of Hever Castle were the occasion of its redemption from ruin. Ruskin has reminded us that the greatest glory of a building is its age plus that sense of mysterious sympathy which we feel in walls that have long been washed by the passing waves of humanity. "It is not," he added, "until a building has assumed this character, till it has been entrusted with the fame, and hallowed by the deeds of men, till its walls have been witnesses of suffering, and its pillars rise out of the shadows of death, that its existence, more lasting as it is than that of the natural objects of the world

around it, can be gifted with even so much as these possess of language and of life." Had Hever Castle not been the childhood home of Anne Boleyn, had it not been that its gardens and halls were the silent witnesses of her courtship by a king, it is likely that it would have been allowed to share the fate of many another ancient building.

Not content with its indubitable connection with the early years of the ill-fated queen of Henry VIII, many of the historians of Hever Castle have claimed that it was also her birthplace. But that is a problem which will probably never be solved. Homer was asserted to be a native of more than seven cities; Anne Boleyn, a less mythical character, has had her nativity located in three villages, one in Norfolk, another in Essex, and a third here in Kent. The probabilities seem to be in favour of Blickling in Norfolk, the chief home of her grandfather; but, whatever the truth may be, it seems beyond dispute that at an early age she was removed to Hever Castle and spent most of her childhood there. Unfortunately the same uncertainty prevails as to the year of her birth. The choice of dates lies between 1501 and 1507, the latter having more in its favour. Indeed, until more definite information is forthcoming, Camden's assertion that she was born in 1507 may be accepted as correct.

When Anne Boleyn was born, Hever Castle had already been some forty years in the possession of

the Boleyn family. The wealth of the family appears to have been amassed by her great-grandfather, Sir Geoffrey Boleyn, a prosperous merchant who was Lord Mayor of London in 1457. Not satisfied with the manor of Blickling, which he purchased from the Sir John Fastolf of the Paston letters, Sir Geoffrey also acquired the manor of Hever, and while his eldest grandson naturally succeeded to the Blickling estate, his second grandson, Thomas, the father of Anne, as naturally received Hever for his portion. That fact lends considerable support to the legend which claims Hever as the birth-place of the future queen.

Here, at any rate, it is agreed she spent her childhood, and the one letter of her early years that has survived is inscribed by her own hand "written at Hever." According to the story told by Lord Herbert, she was a child of "singular beauty and forwardness," and her parents, we learn, "took all care possible for her good education." According to the letter just mentioned, one of her tutors was a Frenchman named Semmonet, but that she had other instructors is clear from her early proficiency in dancing, music, and other accomplishments. Anne Boleyn was always careless in not dating her personal letters, and unfortunately there is no year or month mentioned in her earliest epistle to her father. It seems highly probable, however, that it was written in the late summer of 1514, when she

had been informed that she was to be one of the attendants of Mary Tudor on the occasion of that princess's marriage to the King of France. As the document gives us our first authentic glimpse of Henry's future queen, and as it was undoubtedly written from Hever Castle, it deserves to be included in the annals of that building.

Addressing her father as "Sir," she continued: "I find by your letter that you wish me to appear at court in a manner becoming a respectable female, and likewise that the queen will condescend to enter into conversation with me. At this I rejoice, as I think that conversing with so sensible and elegant a princess will make me even more desirous of continuing to speak and to write good French; the more so as it is by your earnest desire, which, I acquaint you by this present writing, I shall follow to the best of my ability. Sir, I entreat you to excuse me if this letter is badly written: I can assure you the spelling proceeds entirely from my own head, while the other letters were the work of my hands alone: and Semmonet tells me he has left the letter to be composed by myself that nobody else may know what I am writing to you. I therefore pray you not to suffer your superior knowledge to conquer the inclination which you say you have to be of service to me. As to myself, rest assured that I shall not, ungratefully, look upon this office of a father as one that might be dispensed with; nor will

it tend to diminish the affection you are in quest of, resolved as I am to lead as holy a life as you may please to desire of me: indeed my love for you is founded on so firm a base that it can never be impaired." Such was the letter "written at Hever" by Sir Thomas's "very humble and obedient daughter."

Shortly after the penning of that epistle she journeyed away to France in the train of Mary Tudor, and in that country she remained for some seven years, for when Mary Tudor returned to England Anne Boleyn was taken into the service of the new queen of France. That sojourn at the French court must have had a pronounced effect in the moulding of her character and accounts for that sprightliness of manner and quickness of wit by which she was distinguished.

When she was recalled home about the end of 1521, or the beginning of the next year, she would naturally take up her abode at Hever Castle once more. Was it there, or in Wolsey's palace in London, or some other place, that she first attracted the notice of Henry VIII? It will be remembered that the Shakespearean play of "King Henry VIII" locates the meeting in Wolsey's palace. According to the testimony of Cavendish, the famous cardinal was in the habit of arranging gorgeous entertainments of wine and women for the delectation of his royal master, and, by a poetic license, the dramatist

availed himself of one of those gatherings as a means of introducing Henry to his future queen. But that is contrary to the picturesque legend which places the first meeting in the gardens of Hever Castle. The king, so the story goes, was paying a visit to Sir Thomas Boleyn, and came upon the daughter of his host while wandering in the grounds of his castle. Struck by her graceful carriage, he engaged her in conversation, quickly discovering that her gifts of speech were equal to her alluring demeanour. On his return to London the king reported his discovery to Wolsey; he had, he said, been talking with "a young lady who had the wit of an angel and was worthy of a crown." Wolsey smiled. "It is sufficient," he answered, "if your majesty finds her worthy of your love." Henry, however, was confident she would "never condescend in that way." Wolsey thought otherwise; if great princes, he rejoined, choose to play the lover, they had it in their power to soften a heart of steel.

Now, there is an undated letter of Anne's which fits in with this legend. It would seem that Henry sent the maiden some testimony of the pleasure he had experienced in her company, in acknowledgment whereof she penned this frank epistle.

"Sire," she wrote, "it belongs only to the august mind of a great king, to whom Nature has given a heart full of generosity towards the sex, to repay

by favours so extraordinary an artless and short conversation with a girl. Inexhaustible as is the treasury of your majesty's bounties, I pray you to consider that it cannot be sufficient to your generosity; for if you recompense so slight a conversation by gifts so great, what will you be able to do for those who are ready to consecrate their entire obedience to your desires? How great soever may be the bounties I have received, the joy that I feel in being loved by a king whom I adore, and to whom I would with pleasure make a sacrifice of my heart, if fortune had rendered it worthy of being offered to him, will ever be infinitely greater. The warrant of maid of honour to the queen induces me to think that your majesty has some regard for me, since it gives me the means of seeing you oftener, and of assuring you by my own lips (which I shall do on the first opportunity) that I am your majesty's very obliged and very obedient servant, without any reserve."

Were the charms of Anne Boleyn of the mind, or of the body, or of a blend of both? That is another of the unsolved problems of history. "Madame Anne," wrote one chronicler of the time, "is not one of the handsomest women in the world. She is of middling stature, swarthy complexion, long neck, wide mouth, bosom not much raised, and in fact has nothing but the king's great appetite, and her eyes, which are black and beautiful." Another reporter

was less complimentary. He noted that she had a projecting upper tooth, that she had a sixth finger on her left hand, that there was a protuberance on her neck, and that she was subject to asthma. Other writers, however, explain the sixth finger as being merely a double nail, and transform the protuberance into a mole which, by an ornamental collar-band, was actually the occasion of an added attraction.

But there is evidence of a contrary nature. Lord Herbert, as has been noted, spoke of her "singular beauty" as a child, and added this eulogy of her charm as a woman: "When she composed her hands to play and voice to sing, it was joined with that sweetness of countenance that three harmonies concurred. Likewise, when she danced, her rare proportions varied themselves into all the graces that belong to either rest or motion." Of a kindred nature is the testimony of another witness. "Her face and figure," he wrote, "were in other respects symmetrical; beauty and sprightliness sat upon her lips; in readiness of repartee, skill in the dance, and in playing on the lute, she was unsurpassed." To these tributes should be added the quaint panegyric of George Wyatt, the grandson of that Sir Thomas Wyatt who anticipated Henry's admiration of the young lady of Hever Castle. "There was at this time presented to the eyes of the court," wrote George Wyatt, "the rare and admirable beauty of

the fresh and young lady Anne Boleyn, to be attendant upon the queen. In this noble imp the graces of nature, graced by gracious education, seemed even at the first to have promised bliss unto hereafter times; she was taken at that time to have a beauty not so whitely clear and fresh, above all we may esteem, which appeared much more excellent by her favour passing sweet and cheerful, and these both also increased by her noble presence of shape and fashion, representing both mildness and majesty, more than can be expressed." Nor, to complete the picture, should it be forgotten that Anne Boleyn was dowered with a glorious head of rich brown hair, which on state occasions she wore unloosed and adorned with rich jewels.

If tradition speaks truly, Henry at first attempted to gratify his passion for Anne Boleyn on the easiest terms for himself; certainly her letter seemed to invite improper advances. It would appear, however, that Anne quickly repented of her frankness, especially as it soon dawned upon her that she had but to play her cards adroitly to win the highest position in the land. So when her sovereign tempted her, she replied: "Your wife I cannot be, both in respect of my unworthiness, and also because you have a queen; your mistress I will never be!" And from that hour the king realized that he must assume the rôle of the lover and that his only hope of success in that character lay in his

doing his utmost to secure a divorce from Catherine of Aragon.

Anne's position at the court as maid of honour to Catherine of Aragon, while it gave her many opportunities to express how very much she was Henry's "very obliged and very obedient servant," seems also to have contributed to the enflaming of the passion of her royal admirer. At length, however, gossip began to be busy with the two, and it appears that it was at that juncture Anne was dismissed from Catherine's service and had to return to Hever Castle.

And now began that courtship by letter which is unique in the annals of royal wooing. The lady's epistles have disappeared, but those penned by the enamoured king survive to bear testimony to his constantly growing fascination. The chronology of the letters is uncertain, none of them having any date, but an expert in affairs of the heart would have little difficulty in arranging them in an approximate order. Such an authority, for example, would be able to trace the progress of Henry's infatuation by, for one thing, comparing the terms in which he addressed his lady-love. Now he writes to her as his "mistress and friend," anon she is his "good sweetheart," later the word is "darling," and finally she is his "own darling." In the early letters he writes like a chivalrous young knight pining for a glimpse of his love's fair face.

He reminds her of "a point in astronomy," that is, "the longer the days are, the more distant is the sun, and nevertheless the hotter; so is it with our love, for by absence we are kept at a distance from one another, and yet it retains its fervour, at least on my side." The pain of absence was already "too great" for him; his suffering would be intolerable had he not firm hope of her unchanging affection; it was a poor return for his "great love" to be kept at a distance "from the speech and the person of the woman that I esteem most in the world." A rumour reaches him that she is sick, and he sends her at post haste the best physician he can command, bidding her to be guided by his advice, and assuring her that the news of her health will be more precious to him than all the jewels in the world. As touching her staying at Hever, she was to please herself, for she knew "best what air doth best with" her.

There were interludes in this epistolary courtship apparently. As often as he could find suitable excuse, Henry hurried down to Hever, and the tradition of the countryside yet points out the hill overlooking the castle from the summit of which the royal lover used to sound his horn to give notice of his approach. The legends of the house, too, tell how the drawbridge was let down as soon as that familiar signal was heard, and point out a recess in one of the galleries which was fitted up as a

throne for the king's visits. And another apartment is indicated as the bower of the fair lady who was the occasion of this regal favour.

By and by the tone of the letters changes. The matter of the divorce from Catherine of Aragon was being attended to; it would not be long ere he would be able to claim his chief joy on earth, the "care of his mistress." And so with the nearer approach of the day when he would be able to make her his wife he indulges in language that would have been more seemly from the pen of one of his stableboys.

History has written at large the tragic sequel of this strange courtship. The price Anne Boleyn demanded for her favours was duly paid, and then Hever knew her no more. But the pilgrim to these grey walls will reflect how happier had been her lot had she remained true to the ideal placed on her lips by the dramatist:

" 'Tis better to be lowly born,
And range with humble livers in content,
Than to be perk'd up in a glistening grief,
And wear a golden sorrow."

CHAPTER III

A STRONGHOLD OF MANY SIEGES *ROCHESTER CASTLE*

LONDON taverns and pleasure-gardens were more to the liking of Samuel Pepys than the most romantic of ancient buildings, but there were occasions when he turned aside for a moment to visit a venerable relic of the past. As witness this entry in his copious diary: "To Rochester, to visit the old Castle ruins, which hath been a noble place; but, Lord! to see what a dreadful thing it is to look upon the precipices, for it did fright me mightily. The place hath been great and strong in former ages." So Pepys wrote in 1665, and nearly a century earlier William Camden had been equally impressed by that majestic ruin, which, as he observed, was "fortified both by art and situation." Yet even in Camden's days, more than three centuries ago, the glory of Rochester was a thing of the past.

A map of England at the time of the Roman occupation explains why Rochester had been chosen as the site of a "great and strong" castle. It was situated astride the high road that led from the sea-shore to the capital. Watling Street, one of the

most famous of the military highways constructed by the Romans, began at Dover, deflected towards Canterbury, and then made straight for London, taking Rochester on the journey, where there was a ford across the River Medway. There were two reasons, then, why some kind of a fortress should be erected here, for it would serve the dual purpose of defending the highway and river alike. And for such a defence the rising ground on the south bank of the river provided an ideal site. Thus that eminence became fortified "by art and situation." On one side ran the Medway, "with a violent course like a torrent, and, as it were, with a sort of struggling;" the other three sides could be defended by a moat and curtain walls. All traces of the Roman fort have long disappeared, but the numerous Roman coins which have been unearthed from time to time among the ruins of the castle would alone be sufficient to testify to the presence of the conquerors of the world.

From the end of the Roman occupation to the Norman conquest of 1066 there intervened a period of more than six hundred years, during which time Rochester had to bear much of the brunt of the onslaughts of the Saxon and Danish pirates from over the North Sea. As the Medway empties into the estuary of the Thames, it was natural for Saxons and Danes to push their predatory vessels up the river, and as natural that the growing town of



ROCHESTER CASTLE.

Rochester should invite their attacks. So the early chronicles of English history, with their abrupt records that "This year so and so happened," are replete with terse sentences which show how this corner of Kent was often ravaged with fire and sword. "During the Danish wars," says the historian of the county, "Rochester frequently suffered from the inhumanity of those barbarians, this city being often besieged and plundered by them, the enemy in general committing unheard-of cruelties before they returned to their ships."

Nor was it otherwise when William of Normandy had conquered the land. Two years after the battle of Hastings a large portion of the land of the country had been divided among the barons and other leaders who had assisted William in his contest with Harold, and a map which illustrates that apportionment of the spoil shows that that district of England now known as the county of Kent had passed into the possession of Odo the Bishop of Bayeux. Now Odo was the half-brother of the Norman conqueror, and was a typical example of the fighting prelate of the middle ages. It is true he affected the mace as his weapon rather than the sword, thus subscribing to that subtle distinction which prohibited the warrior-churchman from using a weapon likely to cause the shedding of blood, but in all other respects he seems to have been as determined a fighter as the most sanguinary of the secular

barons. He was, in fact, just the type of man to be given charge of a county so open to attacks from the continent as that of Kent, and the old chronicle testifies how he "wrought castles wide amongst the people, and poor folk oppressed." Many a warlike expedition did he lead in different parts of England, always distinguishing himself by the indiscriminate manner in which he harried guilty and innocent alike.

Being given so much authority by his half-brother, Odo at length developed vast ambitions. He aspired to be Pope of Rome, building himself a palace in that city and preparing the way for his election by copious bribery. But when knowledge of this came to the ears of William he promptly clapped his ambitious half-brother into prison, and there he remained until William Rufus seized the English throne. That event was the cause of Odo's undoing. Released from prison, he made common cause with those Normans in England who were more in favour of the claims of Robert, the eldest son of the conqueror, and placed himself at their head. The civil war that followed came to a climax before the walls of Rochester Castle.

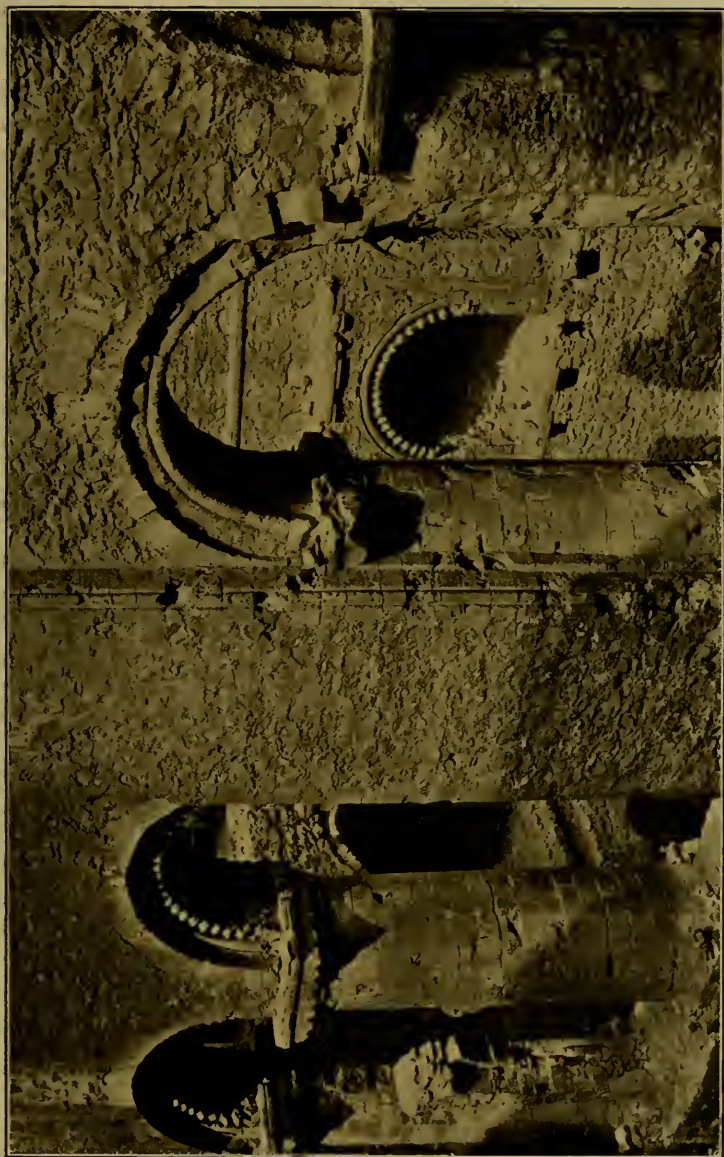
As soon as he realized his danger William Rufus issued a proclamation to the nation. "Let every man," he said, "who is not a nothing quit home and hearth, and hasten to the standard of his sovereign." That epithet worked like magic. No Eng-

lishman wished to be branded as a “nithing,” that is, a cipher, or a villain, and consequently within a few days the Red King found himself at the head of an army of thirty thousand men. Then the hunt of Odo began. He took refuge at first in Pevensey Castle, but after a siege of seven weeks was compelled to surrender. And then he swore an oath to the Red King that he would not only leave the country but would also yield to him his strong castle at Rochester. That he might fulfil that promise Odo was sent to Rochester with an escort of Norman knights, but when the little band reached the fortress on the Medway the knights were arrested by Odo’s friend the Earl of Boulogne and preparations were at once made to resist an attack. William Rufus was naturally furious. In a short time he led his army to the castle and pressed the siege with great vigour. For a while Odo was full of confidence; as the old chronicle has it, there were “some very good knights” in the castle, five hundred of whom, it is said, fought upon the battlements.

But the expected relief from Robert of Normandy came not, and in the end, either through famine or pestilence, the defenders were forced to capitulate. The English in the Red King’s army pleaded with their leader to grant no quarter, but the Normans among his followers persuaded him to allow the besieged to march out with their arms and horses

on the understanding that they would at once leave the country. On learning this good news, Odo, with matchless effrontery, demanded still more lenient terms, stipulating that the royal trumpeters should be restrained from sounding their instruments as the garrison marched out! But that was more than William Rufus would grant. "I wouldn't make such a concession," he angrily answered, "for a thousand gold marks." Thus it was to resounding blasts on the royal trumpets that the first Norman siege of Rochester Castle was ended. And as Odo passed between the ranks of the victors some of the English shouted, "Bring us cords; we will hang this traitor bishop with all his accomplices. O king! why dost thou let him go free?" But the Red King kept his word, and Odo was allowed to leave England in safety, never more to return or rule his earldom of Kent.

Various guesses have been made as to the identity of the builder of that part of Rochester Castle which has survived to this day. Roughly speaking, only the noble keep remains, a lofty structure which dominates the city and is a conspicuous landmark for twenty miles around. Ann Radcliffe, the author of "The Mysteries of Udolpho," for whom all ancient buildings had a singular fascination, was naturally struck by its majestic aspect. "As we descended the hill towards Rochester," she wrote, "how solemn the appearance of the Castle, with



THE INTERIOR OF THE KEEP, ROCHESTER CASTLE.

its square ghostly walls, and their hollow eyes rising over the right bank of the Medway, grey and massive and floorless — nothing remaining but the shell!" By some historians the credit of rearing that sturdy keep has been attributed to Odo of Bayeux; others have named William the Conqueror as its builder. Camden favoured the latter view, because he found it recorded in Domesday that the Norman duke had presented the Bishop of Rochester with a tract of land elsewhere in exchange for the site "on which the castle is seated." But all this implies merely that there was a castle here at the time of Odo's rebellion; not that the castle of the siege above described is the building which still exists.

Several bishops seem to have had a hand in erecting the surviving keep, for the churchmen of the Middle Ages were architects as well as warriors. The truth appears to be, then, that the structure as we know it to-day was begun by Bishop Gundulf and completed by Archbishop William of Corbeil. This means that the existing keep dates back to somewhere about the year 1130, thus giving to the building a venerable antiquity of some eight hundred years.

One of the apartments which has probably undergone little alteration during those eight centuries is that sombre vaulted den under one of the towers, which is pointed out as the state prison of the castle,

the fetid walls of which seem eloquent of human agony. Without the smallest window, and with no connection with the outside world save by the massive door, those who were thrust within this terrible dungeon must indeed have abandoned all hope. It is hardly probable, however, that the first distinguished prisoner of Rochester Castle, Robert, Earl of Gloucester, made the acquaintance of this forbidding den. A natural son of Henry I, he espoused the cause of his half-sister Matilda when she resisted the usurpation of Stephen, and, by an adverse turn of fortune's wheel, fell into the hands of the enemy and was sent prisoner hither. But as he was soon exchanged for Stephen himself it is improbable that he was confined in the state prison.

Eighty-five years after William of Corbeil had proved himself so competent a builder the strength of his workmanship was put to a severe test, for the next siege of Rochester Castle was a far more serious affair than that which led to the downfall and exile of Bishop Odo. Towards the close of the reign of King John the dispute between that monarch and his barons reached a climax. This was the beginning of that struggle for reform which was to continue many years and leave its impress on the history of the fortress on the banks of the Medway. The barons' programme seems a modest affair in these days, for all they demanded from their king was the simple boon of free and unbought justice

for the nation at large, with special provision for the protection of the poor. But John was little inclined to listen; "Why," he asked, "do they not ask for my kingdom?" At last, however, he was compelled to put his name to Magna Charta, only to annul that document as soon as his forces were strengthened by the arrival of hordes of foreign mercenaries.

Now, it so happened that at this crisis the command of Rochester Castle was held by William de Albini, one of the barons who had signed Magna Charta. Such a fortress, occupying so important a position on the highroad between London and the continent, could not be allowed to remain in the hands of the baronial party, and consequently John at once decided to besiege it in person.

But he had undertaken a heavier task than he had anticipated. William de Albini was an accomplished soldier, his garrison was numerous and valiant, and the castle had been well prepared for a siege. Besides, the barons in London had promised to come to the relief of the fortress if it were attacked. It was on the eleventh of October, 1215, that John invested the stronghold with a large force, but day after day went by and week merged into week and still the defenders were able to keep the king at bay. "No siege in those days," wrote an old historian, "was more earnestly enforced, nor more obstinately defended."

One day, however, as an ancient story tells, there came an opportunity which had it been seized would have ended the siege and the whole civil war at one stroke. According to the version of William Beattie, on a morning when De Albini was making his round of the battlements, he was thus accosted by a favourite cross-bowman:

“Seigneur, behold the tyrant!” pointing at the same instant to the well-known person of King John, who was cautiously reconnoitring the weakened points of the castle.

“Well,” said De Albini, “it is the king; what wouldest thou?”

“Shall I take him off, by your leave?” said the bowman, suiting the action to the word and adjusting a steel bolt to the bow-string; “shall I despatch this swift messenger to his highness? Only say the word.”

“Nay, God forbid!” said De Albini, raising his hand to check the rash attempt — “forbear! it is the king.”

“Very well, seigneur,” said the bowman, with a mortified air, “be it according to your pleasure. Only, methinks that were the tyrant in your place, and you on the outwork yonder, there would be no ‘God forbid!’ ’Tis a fine target, seigneur!”

But De Albini would not consent. Even the plea of the bowman that the horse-flesh and the fresh

water of the garrison were nearly exhausted could not persuade him to allow an attempt on the life of an "anointed" king.

By this time the siege had lasted nearly seven weeks. Some progress had certainly been made towards the reduction of the castle, for part of the outer wall had been sapped, and the defenders had been obliged to take refuge in the keep. A mine was laid under one of the corners of that tower, but when a breach had been made in the wall and John's soldiers attempted to force an entry, they were repulsed with great loss. On the last day of November, however, the besiegers were surprised to find the gate of the castle flung open. A moment later the gallant defenders marched out and appealed to the king's mercy. Lack of water and food had compelled unconditional surrender. The fate of the garrison as a whole is unknown; one legend affirms that John ordered all the common soldiers to be hung; another asserts that only one cross-bowman was executed, in harmony, perhaps, with the story cited above. It is certain, however, that the life of William de Albini was spared, though he was cast into prison and mulcted in a heavy fine.

Half a century later another armed force gathered outside the walls of Rochester Castle. It was the old trouble over again; although a new king, Henry III, was on the throne, there were still two parties in the state, the reformers and the royalists

whose interest it was to support the monarch in his exactions. Henry III had made many promises to his dissatisfied barons, he even took solemn oaths to carry out the provisions of Magna Charta, but as soon as his skin was out of danger he reverted to his old courses. The highest offices in the state were given to aliens; he taxed his subjects that he might be generous to his foreign relatives. Hence the renewal of the civil war, and this time the reformers had a capable leader in the person of Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester.

Matters came to a serious climax in the spring of 1264; early in April De Montfort realized that it was necessary to reduce the Castle of Rochester, which was being held for the king by the Earl de Warenne, and he carried with him to the siege all kinds of novel military engines, the use of which he had learnt in his foreign campaigns. His first difficulty was to force the passage of the river, for the castle defenders had taken the precaution to secure the wooden bridge which spanned the Medway. Such a momentary check, however, was no serious obstacle to so experienced a soldier as De Montfort; seizing a vessel higher up the river he loaded it with all kinds of inflammable materials, set light to the cargo, and allowed the burning mass to drift down stream to the bridge. The plan answered admirably; very quickly the bridge caught fire, and its defenders were glad to fall back on the castle for

refuge. At that moment De Montfort led his force over the river, and the siege proper began. He had also despatched a section of his army to attack the castle from the opposite side, and in a few days had made such progress with the investment that the fortress must have speedily fallen had not news reached De Montfort that the king was threatening an attack on London, which necessitated his return to the capital. The little company of his soldiers who were left to continue the blockade fell into the clutches of the relieving force and were cruelly maimed in their hands and feet. Such was the finale of the last serious attack on Rochester Castle.

But in the centuries to come it was to garner a few more royal associations. Here was located one of the halting-places of that regal progress by which Henry VIII conducted Charles V to his capital in 1522; and it was to Rochester that, on New Year's day of 1540, Henry hastened to have his first glimpse of the ill-favoured Anne of Cleves, an interview which failed to "nourish love" in the way the king had anticipated. Rochester, too, if not the castle, can claim the honour of a visit from Henry's great daughter Elizabeth, for the Virgin Queen halted for five days in the city at the end of her progress through Kent in 1573. Here also Charles II made a stage in his journey towards London on the occasion of his "happy restoration" in 1660;

and, finally, twenty-eight years later, it was under the shadow of Rochester Castle walls that James II stepped into the vessel that bore him away from the kingdom he was never to rule again.



LEEDS CASTLE.

CHAPTER IV

A QUEEN AT BAY

LEEDS CASTLE

A YEAR before Samuel Pepys had discovered "what a dreadful thing" it was to "look upon the precipices" of Rochester Castle, his famous rival in the diary-keeping business, John Evelyn, had also been castle-hunting in the fair county of Kent. The explanation was that Evelyn had been appointed one of the commissioners for the care of the prisoners of the Dutch war. Hence his need of a building suitable for the secure detention of those unfortunate beings. Such a structure he found in Leeds Castle, then the property of Lord Culpeper, which was strongly situated on the Roman road a few miles from Maidstone. There are several references to the fortress in Evelyn's diary, the first telling how, after a pleasant visit to one of his cousins, he journeyed the following morning to Leeds Castle, "once a famous hold, now hired by me of my Lord Culpeper for a prison. Here I flooded the dry moat, made a new drawbridge, brought spring water into the court of the castle to an old fountain, and took order for repairs." Several months later he was at the castle again, mustering his six hundred prisoners, ordering "their

proportion of bread to be augmented " and furnishing them with clothes and firing. Ere another year went by Evelyn had the pleasant duty of discharging all his prisoners and restoring the castle to its owner.

If any of those Dutch and French sailors were sensitive to the appeal of romance, and had any knowledge of the history of the fortress in which they were confined, they must have deemed themselves favoured beyond all other prisoners of that war. For by the middle of the seventeenth century Leeds Castle had entered into a heritage of associations such as gave it great distinction among the historic buildings of England.

There are good reasons for believing that a fortress of some kind was built on this site in Anglo-Saxon days, for the earliest date in the history of the castle takes us back to the close of the ninth century. When the county of Kent became the property of that Bishop Odo who figures in the previous chapter the Anglo-Saxon building was still in existence, but it seems probable that when the manor once more reverted to the king, owing to Odo's rebellion, and was presented to a more faithful baron, its new owner signalized his good fortune by pulling down the old and rearing an entirely new castle. This reconstruction was carried out a little subsequently to 1088, the year of Odo's forfeiture, but it must not be imagined that all the present



THE ENTRANCE BRIDGE, LEEDS CASTLE.

castle dates back to that far-off time. No doubt the expert in such matters will be able to trace Norman architecture here and there, but the building as it stands is a compound of many centuries and many styles. For example, the structure now used as a boathouse was once a swimming-bath, the erection of which is credited to Edward I who is thought to have built it in 1290. Other portions of the castle, such as the Maidens' Tower, were constructed during the reign of Henry VIII. When Horace Walpole visited the place in 1752 he was so much in love with what he thought was Gothic architecture that he had not patience enough to search out the examples of other styles which are blended in the building; all he admired was the moat, which he voted a "handsome object, and is quite a lake, supplied by a little cascade which tumbles through a bit of a romantic grove." That wide-spreading moat, which is fed by the adjacent River Len, is still one of the most attractive features of this historic building.

Although Edward I and his *chère reine*, the faithful Eleanor of Castile, visited Leeds Castle several times in the late thirteenth century, and despite the fact that in those days the building was often used for the entertainment of distinguished guests from abroad, it was not until 1321 that it figured prominently in the annals of English history.

And once more the occasion had its origin in those

feuds between king and lords which were so common in the England of the Middle Ages. In this case, however, it was not so much a question of reform in government as the idiotic favouritism of Edward II which enraged the nobles. Edward was too great a fool to learn by experience; "his only object in life," is the verdict of an impartial historian, "was to gratify the whim of the moment, reckless of consequences." The tragedy which overtook his first favourite, Piers Gaveston, did not warn him against taking another in the person of the younger Hugh Despenser, for whose sake he had, by 1321, once more incurred the enmity of many of the principal nobles. He had been obliged to exile that second favourite, but a chance event of this year gave him the opportunity to engineer his recall.

It so happened that on an October day his queen, Isabella the Fair, who had not yet won for herself the coarse epithet of "the She-wolf of France," took it into her head to anticipate Chaucer's pilgrims by making a journey to the shrine of Thomas à Becket at Canterbury. Starting, apparently, from London, Isabella determined to make the pilgrimage by easy stages, and as Leeds Castle formed a part of her dower it occurred to her that that would be an excellent place in which to halt for the night. It should be remembered, however, that at that time the castle had been committed to the charge of Lord

Badlesmere, who, as it so happened, was away from home, taking counsel with some of the barons who were stoutly opposed to the king and his favourite. He had left his wife in charge of the castle, and appointed one Sir Thomas Culpeper as his deputy captain. Such was the situation at Leeds Castle when Isabella the Fair made up her mind to lodge within its walls for the night.

In order that due preparation might be made for the reception of herself and retinue, Isabella sent one of her marshals forward to announce that she was on her way to the castle, and that she purposed spending the night under its roof. But that royal messenger had an untoward reception. Despite the fact that the castle was really royal property, and that it was the queen herself who asked its hospitality, the marshal was roundly informed by Lady Badlesmere that she would not admit any one without an order from her husband, and that the queen would have to seek some other lodging! And even while that truculent message was conveyed to Isabella's marshal, the queen herself arrived before the castle with her train. Alarmed by the appearance of such a company, and inferring that an attack was intended, Sir Thomas Culpeper bade his men shoot on the queen's escort, and they handled their bows with such effect that six of Isabella's attendants fell dead.

An amazing reception that for a queen asking ad-

mittance to her own castle! But, for the moment, there was nothing to be done save to seek a night's lodging elsewhere. That Isabella was furious at being kept at bay outside one of her own castles was natural; and it was equally natural that she should hurry back to her husband the king and urge him to take revenge on Lady Badlesmere for her insolence.

Edward was nothing loath to avenge the insult to his wife; under the cover of such an excuse he might gather together a force which he could also use against his rebellious lords. It made matters all the worse for the daring occupants of Leeds Castle that Lord Badlesmere actually wrote to Isabella saying he fully approved of his wife's action in refusing to admit her into that fortress. So Edward issued a mandate to his subjects, calling upon them for their assistance to punish the indignity offered to his queen. His beloved consort, the document stated, had been treated with contempt by the family of Badlesmere, who "had insolently opposed her in her desire of entering Leeds Castle," and to add to this insult Lord Badlesmere "had by his letters approved of this misconduct of his family in thus obstructing and contumeliously treating the queen;" wherefore "a general muster of all persons between the ages of sixteen and sixty is called to attend the king in an expedition against Leeds Castle."

That call to arms was promptly obeyed. The men of London flocked to the king's standard in great numbers, for, as the biographer of Isabella has stated, "the queen was the darling of the nation, and all were ready to avenge even the shadow of a wrong that was offered to her." News of the gathering of the king's army fled apace to Leeds Castle, and hasty preparations were made for the expected siege. Lady Badlesmere no doubt had full confidence in the strength of her fortress, besides anticipating that her husband and the forces of the rebel lords would soon come to her relief. But her expectation of succour was to be disappointed, and Edward and his force pressed the siege of the castle with such vigour that the defenders were obliged to surrender the fortress in less than three weeks after Lady Badlesmere had denied admission to the queen. There was short shrift for Sir Thomas Culpeper; he was tied to the tail of a horse, dragged out of the castle, and hung on the drawbridge; and a dozen more of the leading spirits of the garrison were also summarily put to death. My Lady Badlesmere and her children were hurried off to prison in the Tower of London, and ere many months had gone by her husband was captured, executed, and contributed his head to the adornment of the city gate of Canterbury.

Some eighty years later another king came to Leeds Castle. But when Richard II passed within

these walls he was in a far different case than was Edward II when he besieged them from without. As was to be the case with Edward a few years after his revenge of his queen, by the time Richard came to Leeds Castle he had fallen into the hands of his enemies. Legend affirms that he had been solemnly warned whither his policy of tyranny was leading him; a hermit had admonished him that if he did not amend his ways he would shortly hear such news as would make his ears tingle. But Richard was heedless of the hint that Henry of Lancaster was aiming at the crown, and now he had reaped the reward of his indifference. For, during Richard's absence in Ireland, Henry, welcomed by a disaffected people, had carried all before him, and when the king returned to England he was speedily made prisoner. Pending his deposition he was confined in several fortresses, Leeds Castle being one of the number, and an old story tells how he was brought hither disguised as a forester. Another tradition avers that about the same time his twelve-year-old queen, Isabella of Valois, was also confined in this Kentish stronghold. Either Shakespeare did not know or ignored these legends; and so it befell that Leeds Castle has no immortality in the tragedy of "The Life and Death of Richard the Second."

At the time when Richard II was a prisoner in Leeds Castle that fortress was in the possession of

Thomas Arundel, Archbishop of Canterbury, under whose command, some thirteen years later, it was made the scene of a striking episode in the conflict of the Church with the doctrines of the Lollards. One of the chief supporters of the new faith was Sir John Oldcastle, whose influence was such that it was deemed expedient to secure his recantation or visit him with the censure of the Church. But Sir John was obdurate. Not even for his king would he renounce his religious opinions. So Archbishop Arundel took the matter in hand. He appointed a day for the examination of the heretic, and commissioned one of his servants to serve Sir John with a citation to appear before him at Leeds Castle on a certain day. That messenger, however, found it impossible to serve the summons, for Sir John refused to admit him to his castle. Whereupon the archbishop gave orders that the citation should be publicly posted on the doors of Rochester Cathedral, and on the day appointed assembled his court in "the greater chapel" of Leeds Castle. That everything might be in due order, the complaint against Sir John Oldcastle was duly formulated, and then the officer of the court was commanded to call for the appearance of the heretic defendant. Of course there was no answer. Sir John had paid as little attention to the summons on the door of Rochester Cathedral as he did to the visit of the archbishop's messenger. There was

only one thing for the head of the Church to do. "After proclamation made," he reported in his account of that day's proceedings, "and we had long waited, and he not appearing, we justly pronounced him, as he was, contumacious; and then and there returned him excommunicated, in punishment for so high contumacy." Like the Jackdaw of Rheims, Sir John does not seem to have been "one penny the worse" for that cursing by bell and book and candle; at least, the archbishop was to lie in his grave several years ere the heretic was at length laid by the heels.

In the fifteenth century no one could be confident that he would not be brought to trial for some offence or other. Laws are supposed to have multiplied greatly in modern days, which is doubtless true, but in the "good old times" so many things were deemed worthy of punishment that the modern man has a far greater chance of escaping an appearance in a court than his unfortunate predecessor of the fifteenth century. Even the highest in the land were not exempt from the danger.

Take the case of Joan of Navarre as an example. As the widow of Henry IV she was, in 1418, on perfectly friendly relations with her step-son, Henry V, and yet a little later she was suddenly arrested and made a prisoner in Leeds Castle. The exact nature of the charge against her is unknown to this day; the old records have some vague reference to

her attempting to compass the death of the king “in the most horrible manner that could be devised,” and it has been thought that the offence for which she was imprisoned was that of witchcraft. The man who made the accusation, a friar named John Randolph, was rewarded in an unexpected manner, for he was put to death; the queen-dowager was deprived of her property and kept in close confinement for several years. When she was released, in 1422, she was at Leeds Castle.

A month after the order for Joan's release was signed the king, Henry V, whose life she was supposed to have threatened, was removed by death from all danger of witchcraft. But his successor, Henry VI, had not been a decade on the throne when another trafficker with the powers of darkness was brought to book within the walls of Leeds Castle. Once more, too, the culprit was a woman, none other, in fact, than Eleanor, Duchess of Gloucester. Her husband, it will be remembered, was the youngest son of Henry IV, and as Duke of Gloucester, — “the good Duke Humphrey” as he was strangely called, — he was for many years, during the minority of Henry VI, practically ruler of the land. Eleanor, his second wife, the daughter of Lord Cobham, was a beautiful but a greedy and ambitious woman, and she seems to have thought that by resort to the black arts it might be possible for her

husband to attain the throne and make her queen of England.

Under that conviction she made friends with many professors of necromancy, including Roger Bolinbroke, Thomas Southwell, and a woman known as the Witch of Eye; "to whose charge it was laid," said an old historian, "that these four persons should, at the request of the said duchess, devise an image of wax like the King, the which image they dealt so with, that by their devilish incantations and sorcery they intended to bring out of life, little and little, the King's person, as they little and little consumed that image." This was a serious matter in the fifteenth century, as Eleanor found to her cost when she was haled to Leeds Castle and put upon her trial within the walls which witnessed the excommunication of Sir John Oldcastle. To some of the counts she pleaded guilty, and indeed, if Drayton had any insight into her character, she had a full share of the witch temperament. For in the poem which Drayton makes her address to her husband she utters a stirring imprecation on one of her female enemies:

"O, that I were a witch but for her sake!
I' faith her queenship little rest should take:
I'd scratch that face that may not feel the air,
And knit whole ropes of witch-knots in her hair:
O, I would hag her nightly in her bed,
And on her breast sit like a lump of lead,
And like a fairy pinch that dainty skin,
Her wanton blood is now so cocker'd in!"

As the result of her trial in Leeds Castle, this gentle lady was doomed to a penance in the streets of London, through which she had to walk for three days bareheaded and with a lighted taper in her hand to offer at the various churches she passed. And then she was committed to prison for the rest of her days. The warrant for her commitment is a singularly interesting document when read in the light of recent history. Those officials who were charged with the duty of seeing to her imprisonment were warned not to allow any "sickness or any dissimulation of her" to thwart them in the execution of their task. Which would seem to indicate that the feigned sickness and hunger-strike of the modern suffragette were anticipated by Eleanor, Duchess of Gloucester, so long ago as 1431.

CHAPTER V

PLOTTING MURDER FOR THE KING

SALTWOOD CASTLE

“By what strange chances do we live in history!” exclaimed Carlyle. He might have included buildings as well as men in that apostrophe. For it is true of many an ancient castle in England that had it not been for some one untoward event it would never have emerged from its obscurity as the home of a forgotten line of nobles. This is eminently the case with Saltwood Castle, though for a vivid appreciation of its chief association with twelfth century history it is necessary to recall several scenes which were enacted far away from its walls.

On a June Sunday of 1162 one Thomas à Becket had been consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury. To succeed to such a position was a great change for a man who had hitherto been a statesman and a soldier. But he was a notable favourite with Henry II, and that monarch was under the impression that if he appointed his friend to the headship of the Church he would find in him a valuable assistant in his policy of strengthening the power of the throne. Becket himself was little inclined to change his secular for a sacred office. He was fond



SALTWOOD CASTLE.

of his gay attire as the chancellor of the king, and when Henry first intimated that it was his wish he should become archbishop he, pointing to his gorgeous dress, exclaimed with a laugh, "You are choosing a fine dress to figure at the head of your Canterbury monks!" And there was another reason why Becket dreaded the office. "You will soon hate me as much as you love me now," he warned the king; "for you assume an authority in the affairs of the Church to which I will never assent." Despite that prediction, Henry insisted upon having his way, and Becket was duly installed as the chief prelate of the realm.

In less than a year his prophecy began to be fulfilled. Whenever any conflict arose between the claims of the Church and the king the new archbishop at once took the side of his own order. The outcome of all this was that in a little more than two years after his consecration Becket fled from England to seek an interview with the Pope. Nor did he return until nearly six years had elapsed. In October, 1170, the king and archbishop met at Amboise and effected a kind of reconciliation, and Becket agreed to return to England on the understanding that he should be restored to his lands and honours as head of the English Church. When he set out on his journey he carried with him letters from the Pope which gave him power to deal as he thought best with the Archbishop of York and the

Bishops of London and Salisbury, all of whom had taken part in the coronation of Henry's son and thus infringed one of the rights of the See of Canterbury.

Learning that there was a plot to waylay him on his landing and seize his papal letters, Becket took the precaution to send those letters on in advance by a trusted messenger, who delivered them to the three prelates. By those documents the Archbishop of York was suspended from his office and the Bishops of London and Salisbury excommunicated. As soon as Becket reached England the three prelates urged him to release them from suspension and excommunication, and when he refused they prepared to cross into Normandy to lay their case before the king in person.

Becket's welcome home was as enthusiastic as he could have wished. But there was a dark lining to the silver cloud. When he attempted to approach Henry's son, he was bidden "go and perform his sacred ministry at Canterbury." And he soon learnt that one of his principal castles, namely Saltwood Castle, was still in the possession of Randulf de Broc, to whom it had been granted by the king, and who made it clear that he was not inclined to yield it up again to its owner. Nor was that all. Randulf persisted in hunting the deer of the archbishop's woods, while another member of the family waylaid and cut off the tails of a horse and mule

belonging to Becket. Such was the condition of affairs when Christmas-day came round. It found the archbishop in no forgiving mood. In the Vulgate version of the gospel that text which in modern times reads "On earth peace, good will to men," was written "On earth, peace to men of good will," and that was the text Becket selected for his Christmas sermon. There was no peace, he said, save to men of good will. Such a text suited his stern purpose in that Christmas homily. He denounced the three bishops who had encroached on the coronation rights of the See of Canterbury and excommunicated them; he passed sentence upon several vicars who had accepted charges without his authority; and then, with the fierceness of a prophet, he flamed against the insults offered to him by Randolph de Broc and his family and solemnly cursed them all.

Meanwhile another scene had been enacted across the channel in Normandy. The three prelates who had incurred the displeasure of Becket made their way to the court of Henry at Bur-le-Roi, and reached the castle shortly before Christmas. The object of their visit has already been explained; but in addition to informing the king of their own grievances they had an alarming tale to tell of the high-handed manner in which the returned archbishop was conducting himself. What did they advise, Henry asked. "Take council with your bar-

ons," they rejoined; "it is not for us to say what should be done." And then one of their number added the significant remark: "As long as Thomas lives, you will have neither good days, nor peaceful kingdom, nor quiet life."

Those words, as Dean Stanley remarked, "goaded the king into one of those paroxysms of fury to which all the earlier Plantagenet princes were subject, and which was believed by themselves to arise from a mixture of demoniacal blood in their race. . . . Of such a kind was the frenzy which he showed on the present occasion." Tennyson has put his outburst into poetry, preserving with marvellous faithfulness the words which are attributed to him by the chroniclers of the time:

"No man to love me, honour me, obey me!
Sluggards and fools!
The slave that eat my bread has kick'd his King!
The dog I cramm'd with dainties worried me!
The fellow that on a lame jade came to court,
A ragged cloak for saddle — he, he, he,
To shake my throne, to push into my chamber —
My bed, where ev'n the slave is private — he —
I'll have her out again, he shall absolve
The bishops — they but did my will — not you —
Sluggards and fools, why do you stand and stare?
You are no king's men — you — you — you are Becket's men.
Down with King Henry! up with the Archbishop!
Will no man free me from this pestilent priest? "

Whatever Henry may have meant by his impassioned exclamation, "Not one will deliver me from

this low-born priest! ” to four of his knights who heard the outburst the words seemed to bear but one interpretation. Those four were Reginald Fitzurse, Hugh de Moreville, William de Tracy, and Richard le Bret, and, on the day following Christmas, they were suddenly missing from Henry’s court in Normandy. Travelling two by two, perhaps to avoid suspicion, they made their way to the French coast, embarking thence for the opposite shore of England. Although two of them landed near Dover and the other two at a port some thirty miles distant, legend avers that the four knights all reached their destination within an hour of each other, being guided thereto, as the old monks asserted, by the agency of the devil. That destination was none other than Saltwood Castle, standing then, as now, on the slope of a valley within sound and sight of the sea.

Had the four knights known what had taken place in the Cathedral of Canterbury on Christmas-day, had they heard the denunciation and excommunication of Randulf de Broc, had they seen Becket hurl his candle to the floor as a symbol of the extinction of the man he had cursed, those travellers from across the Channel could not have chosen a more suitable haven than Saltwood Castle. The news of their approach seems to have been conveyed to the excommunicated lord of the fortress, for the old story affirms that De Broc was waiting to welcome

his visitors from the king's court. No detailed account of what passed between the five was ever placed on record; but it is violating no probabilities to imagine that the conversation between the five men was confined largely to the events of the last few days as they had transpired in England and Normandy. Randulf de Broc would be full of the news of his own excommunication, while the four knights would have much to tell their host of the fury of the king and his impassioned exclamation: "Not one will deliver me from this low-born priest!" What was to be done? As king's men it behoved them to make proof of their loyalty and devotion. And so, as the old stories tell, those five sat together, or, at least, the four knights, all through that winter afternoon plotting how they could "deliver" their sovereign. And the twilight fell, and then night settled down in darkness, and still the four, with candles unlit so that they could not even see each others' faces, laid their plans within the secure shelter of Saltwood Castle.

Such sleep as came to them that night they enjoyed under the same roof, but in the morning they were early astir. Their first act was to issue an edict in the name of the king for a troop of soldiers, and when that escort had assembled they rode off in the direction of Canterbury, some fifteen miles distant. In the afternoon they sought an interview

with Becket, an interview, however, which resulted in nothing more than an angry discussion. But the attendants of the archbishop had a premonition of what would be the end of that day's history, and at length they pleaded with their master to take refuge in the adjacent Cathedral. Nor did he reach that sacred haven much too soon, for the knights, who had gone for their arms, quickly returned and followed Becket through the cloister into the main building. Dusk had fallen, and for the moment the knights could not distinguish their prey. "Where is Thomas Becket, traitor to the king?" one of them called out. There was no reply; but when another shouted, "Where is the archbishop?" Becket himself instantly rejoined, "Here I am, no traitor, but the archbishop and priest of God. What do you wish?" For a few minutes there was an angry interchange of threats and defiance; the soldier's blood awoke in Becket's veins, and more than once he hurled his assailants from him; in stinging phrase, too, the archbishop was more than a match for the four knights. But the unequal conflict was soon decided; one blow almost severed the crown of his head, and as he fell to the pavement another of the knights scattered his brains on the stones, exclaiming, "Let us go. The traitor is dead; this man will rise no more."

So did the four knights "deliver" their king from that "low-born priest." And no sooner had

they accomplished their task than they rushed from the Cathedral, mounted their horses, and sped back to Saltwood Castle. There they remained through the night of that thirtieth of December, 1170, but in the morning they took horse again and halted not until they had journeyed more than forty miles from the castle in which they had plotted murder for the king. But so long as the story of Thomas à Becket is told so long will the imagination turn to this ancient building as a memorial of that terrible crime.

Remembering the abject penance by which Henry II tried to convince the world that he was not responsible for the murder of Becket, it might be imagined that he took the earliest opportunity to deprive Randulf de Broc of Saltwood Castle and restore it to the See of Canterbury. It seems, however, that he did nothing of the kind; that, in fact, it was not until his son John succeeded to the throne nearly twenty years later that the castle and manor of Saltwood reverted once more to the temporal possessions of the head of the Church. From that date, 1199, to the time of the suppression of the monasteries, the castle knew no other owner than the archbishop for the time being. It was Thomas Cranmer who, alarmed at the remarks which were made about the temporal possessions of the Church, thought it wise to forestall any possible demand on the part of the crown and voluntarily presented

Henry VIII with the building and all the land which belonged to it.

During the interval, and especially in the thirteenth and the early part of the following century, Saltwood Castle seems to have been in the occupation of various knights, who, of course, held it as tenants of the Archbishop of Canterbury. When, however, William Courtenay succeeded to the See in 1381, that prelate, being of noble descent, appears to have realized that the castle would make an admirable archiepiscopal palace, with the result that he had the building largely reconstructed and its amenities enhanced by the addition of a beautiful park. It is affirmed, indeed, that Saltwood Castle became his favourite place of residence, and a reference to the old records of the corporation of New Romney shows that he was often dwelling there. The officials of that corporation were keenly alive to the advantage of being on good terms with Archbishop Courtenay, for they frequently sent him presents at the expense of the town. Thus in the year 1389 there is an entry which runs: "Paid eleven shillings and twopence for fish sent to the Archbishop, being at Saltwood;" and the expenditure of the following year included this item: "Paid for capons and cygnets sent to the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, at Saltwood, and horses hired for the same, with messengers, twenty-seven shillings and tenpence."

Archbishop Courtenay's arms may yet be seen on various parts of the building, and there is still told in that Kentish countryside a story which suggests the kind of man he was. Offended one day by the slovenly manner in which some of his tenants had delivered straw at the castle, he summoned them into his presence and made them take oath that they would carry out whatever he commanded. On their promise being given he ordered them to form into a procession, and to each man was assigned a sack of straw to carry, as an object lesson that it was possible to handle straw without littering it all over the castle courtyard and grounds. The anecdote gives support to the view that Archbishop Courtenay though a man of hasty temper was not lacking in good nature.

Although a later archbishop, Thomas Bouchier, purchased the manor of Knowle and transformed the mansion there into the chief palace of himself and his successors, he did not wholly abandon Saltwood Castle. Thus the annals of the corporation of Lydd show that in 1455 a sum of twenty-two pence was expended "for two horsemen two times, riding to speak with the Archbishop, coming from Appledore riding to the Castle of Saltwood." Such records as these, however, are of but moderate interest compared with the part the castle played in the murder of Becket, yet they serve to illustrate the curious Nemesis by

which the very building in which that deed was plotted became for many years the chief country palace of the successors of that ill-fated prelate.

CHAPTER VI

HELD FOR THE KING

LEWES CASTLE

AMONG the many ancient fortresses of England which live in history by reason of that struggle between king and nobles out of which grew the liberty of more modern days Lewes Castle can claim a distinguished pre-eminence. For the battle-field on which its towers looked down on a May day of 1264 was the birthplace of that legislative assembly in which the commoners of the nation were at length summoned to become the associates of the prelates and peers in moulding the laws of the land.

But by the date of that most notable conflict of the Barons' War the town of Lewes could already boast an ancient history. The neolithic and bronze implements, which have been unearthed from the tumuli and earthworks of the surrounding hills, afford convincing proof of the existence of a human settlement here long prior to the Roman conquest of Britain, while the numerous relics of the world conquerors, such as coins and pottery and rings and fibulæ, which have been recovered from time to time, are sufficient evidence that this pleasant spot on a spur of the South Downs was once a Roman station. Legend avers that a castle was reared here in Saxon



LEWES CASTLE.

days, and that Alfred the Great was its builder, but if that were the case all traces of the building have wholly disappeared. The written word, however, bears testimony to the fact that Athelstan, the king of the West Saxons, established two mints at Lewes in the tenth century, and that by the eleventh century, when Edward the Confessor was king of the English, there existed an ordered community with its own curious laws.

As is the case with so many other towns, it is in the pages of the Domesday Book of Norman William that we get our first authentic picture of this historic spot. That record tells how Lewes contributed an annual sum of six pounds and four shillings to the exchequer of Edward the Confessor, how, in addition, his hundred and twenty-seven burgesses were responsible for a further sum of twenty shillings when the king made war, and how the number of houses amounted to nearly four hundred, representing a population of some two thousand souls. The town was ruled by stringent laws in those far-off days of the eleventh century. Thus if a man or woman was caught in adultery each was fined eight shillings and fourpence, and "the king hath the adulterer, and the archbishop the woman." Murder was deemed a less heinous offence in those turbulent days, for the fine of a mere shedder of blood was but seven shillings. Buying and selling were made to contribute to the town funds, for

when a horse changed owners the seller and the purchaser had alike to pay a penny to the provost. And, as in those days human flesh was as marketable as horse flesh, it was stipulated that when a man was sold the bargain was only lawful when the seller and the purchaser paid fourpence to the chief officer of the town.

Such, in substance, is the earliest written page of Lewes history, the actual words of which, firmly inscribed on vellum, may yet be seen in the Public Record Office of London; for the earliest record in stone a visit must be paid to that re-built church which nestles under the shadow of the castle walls. When Camden explored that building it was "quite desolate, and overgrown with bramble," but the curious monument which most attracted his attention, an arch made of sixteen stones and bearing an archaic inscription, has been carefully preserved in the more modern building. The inscription is in quaint Latin, which has been rendered in English thus:

"Intombed a soldier here of royal race,
Magnus his name, from mighty Danish source,
Resigned his title, gave the Lamb his place,
And closed as lowly eremite his course."

Who this Magnus was is an unsolved problem. One theory makes him the youngest of Harold's three sons; another describes him as a Danish general who, on being defeated in a battle near Lewes, aban-

doned the sword for the cross and spent the rest of his days as a monk.

Soon after the Norman Conquest of 1066 a new chapter opened in the history of Lewes. As a reward for his services at the Battle of Hastings, William de Warren was presented with about a sixth part of the county of Sussex and established his chief seat in this town. Here, then, he reared his castle, some of the remains of which yet form a part of the structure as it exists to-day. Nor did that exhaust his activities as a builder. His castle made him sure of the world that now is; to give him a lien on the world to come he erected a house of prayer. The old chronicles tell that Earl Warren and his wife Gundrada, who is thought by some to have been a daughter of William the Conqueror, were on a pilgrimage to Rome when they were prevented from accomplishing their object by the sudden outbreak of war. At that juncture they were offered the hospitality of the monastery of Cluni, where they were entertained so liberally that they resolved to give tangible form to their gratitude by founding a daughter house of that order in their own town of Lewes.

Hence the Priory of St. Pancras, the scarred relics of which still stand in a meadow to the south of the town. Founded in 1077, the priory, which was the first of the Cluniac order to be erected on English soil, sent many a mitred prior to the parliament

of the land, and flourished apace for more than four and a half centuries. The end came in 1537, when an agent of Henry VIII arrived in Lewes armed with full authority to raze the building to the ground. The letter in which that iconoclast reported his zealous labours may yet be read among the manuscripts in the British Museum, and sets forth the "manner and fashion" employed in undermining the pillars and tearing down the walls.

Little escaped the destroying hands of the despoilers of the old monasteries, but it appears that some reverent spirit did rescue the tomb of Gundrada. After many adventures that interesting memorial at last found a resting-place in a little chapel adjoining one of the churches of the town, where also are deposited the leaden coffers of Gundrada and her husband, which were unearthed during some railway excavations. The tomb is of black marble; the Latin inscription has been happily paraphrased thus:

"Her age's glory; of the tree of Dukes a noble shoot,
Gundrada, England's churches hath replenished with the fruit
And the sweet odour of her graces. Martha-like, replete
With charity towards the poor; she sat at Jesus' feet
Like Mary — Now her Martha's part is given to the tomb,
Her Mary's better part, in heaven, eternally shall bloom.
O holy Pancreas! well canst thou her pious deeds attest;
Her heir she makes thee; as thy mother take her to thy breast.
The sixth before June's calends 't was that broke — oh fatal day! —
The alabastrum of her flesh, and sent her soul away."

That memorial, and the leaden coffers that held the dust of the Earl Warren and his wife, should appeal with singular force to the pilgrim to Lewes, for they help towards a realization of the man and woman whose castle and priory were to play so prominent a part in the deadly struggle between Henry III and his barons.

By the spring of 1264 the tension between the king and many of his nobles had reached the breaking-point. Nor is it possible for any impartial person to read the history of those days without marvelling at the patience which had been shown towards the English sovereign. His inherent unfitness to rule is now generally admitted; Hume's verdict that he was "too feeble to sway a sceptre whose weight depended entirely on the firmness and dexterity of the hand which held it" cannot be gainsaid. But in addition to his being unfit to conduct war and ill fitted to maintain peace, he must be pronounced guilty of a far heavier indictment. So little of a patriot was he that he filled every office and command with men of alien birth; "they exhausted the revenues of the crown, already too much impoverished; they invaded the rights of the people; and their insolence, still more provoking than their power, drew on them the hatred and envy of all orders of men in the kingdom." When these upstart foreigners, secure in the favour of the king, were chided with their offences against the

laws of the land, they rejoined: "What do the English laws signify to us? We mind them not." Henry was also a willing tool in the hands of the papacy, agreeing complaisantly to all the usurpations and exactions of Rome. The chief benefices of the kingdom were granted to Italians, while the king's own foreign chaplain is credited with holding no fewer than seven hundred church livings!

Nor was that all. In the preceding reign the barons had wrested Magna Charta from John, the new king's father, but Henry violated that charter again and again. When his needs made it necessary to apply to parliament for money he swore to observe the charter; when the money was in his hands he perjured his oath. Once, indeed, his solemn promise to ratify the Great Charter took this form: "So help me God, I will keep all these articles inviolate, as I am a man, as I am a Christian, as I am a knight, and as I am a king crowned and anointed." Yet hardly had he sworn his faith thus than he returned to his old courses of tyrannous government. No wonder the patriotic barons insisted that he should dismiss his foreign advisers and give a sufficient pledge for the observance of Magna Charta.

In a previous chapter it has been explained that Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, the leader of the baronial party, had been obliged to abandon the siege of Rochester Castle owing to London being

threatened by the king's forces. As soon as it was known, however, that the redoubtable Montfort was marching to the capital, the king thought better of his purpose, and, accompanied by his warlike son Edward, marched away in a southward direction. It soon transpired that his objective was the town of Lewes, where, as he knew, he could count upon the support not only of his half-brother, John, Earl Warren, but also upon the assistance of those other lords who held the castles of Pevensey, Hastings and Arundel. Besides, Lewes is close to the shores of the English Channel, and was thus within easy reach of men and money from the continent. Altogether it was a wise stroke of strategy which determined Henry to gather his forces in and about this town. The priory would furnish ideal headquarters for a man so ostensibly pious as he; the castle would be a more seemly abode for his militant son. By the eleventh of May, then, the king had established himself at the priory of Lewes and his son Edward had become the guest of his uncle in the castle.

Two days after the royalists had pitched their camp in and around Lewes, the baronial army, with Montfort at its head, arrived at a village some nine miles to the north of the town. Before leaving London the leader of the reformers had taken counsel with the chief men of his party, and it had been resolved that as soon as the two forces came within

touch of each other a final effort should be made to arrange their differences in a peaceful manner if possible. In agreement with that policy, on the morning of the thirteenth of May two prelates, the Bishops of London and Worcester, set out on an errand of peace from the camp of the barons. They were instructed to offer the king monetary compensation for such destruction of property as the supporters of the barons had been guilty of, and in addition they bore a letter to Henry signed by Montfort and the Earl of Gloucester. Addressed to the king in the most complimentary terms, the essential sentences of that epistle were these: "Since it is apparent by many proofs that certain persons among those who surround you, have uttered many falsehoods against us to your Lordship, devising all the evil in their power, not only towards us, but towards yourself and the whole kingdom: May your Excellency know, that as we wish to preserve the health and safety of your person with all our might, and with the fidelity due to you, proposing only to resist by all means in our power those persons, who are not only our enemies, but yours, and those of the whole kingdom, may it please you not to believe their falsehoods."

Nor was that all. The two bishops were also authorized to say that Montfort and his party were willing to submit their case to the arbitration of a jury of churchmen. But all these proposals were



THE ENTRANCE GATEHOUSE, LEWES CASTLE.

treated with derision by the royalists. The interview took place in the refectory of the priory, the walls of which resounded with the laughter of the king's friends when they had heard Montfort's letter read and been acquainted with his suggestion for arbitration.

“ Then rose on high their haughty cry,
‘ Shall churchman's word rule soldier's sword?
Knighthood's debased, 'neath priest laid low.’ ”

One of the chief spokesmen for the royalists was the king's son Edward, who exclaimed: “ They shall have no peace whatever, unless they put halters round their necks, and surrender themselves for us to hang them up or drag them down, as we please.” The royalists, in short, were confident that an appeal to the sword must be decided in their favour, for they had in their camp an army of some sixty thousand men compared with the forty thousand commanded by Montfort.

So the weakling king was persuaded to return a haughty reply to all the overtures of the barons. In his letter of answer he rebuked Montfort and his associates for their “ lawless ” oppressions, declared that he accepted as his own the grievances and enemies of the lords who were with him, and roundly added: “ We, therefore value not your faith or love, and defy you, as enemies.” But that was not the only document which the two bishops

were instructed to carry back to the barons. The king's brother Richard, who prided himself on his high-sounding title of "King of the Romans," and the king's son Edward sent a letter of their own, in which the barons were informed that they were all defied as "public enemies by each and all of us your enemies, and that henceforth, whenever occasion offers, we will, with all our might, labour to damage your persons and property." And nothing that the bishops could urge was of any avail to mitigate the boastful spirit of the supporters of the king.

\ That night the scenes in the rival camps nine miles from each other presented a strange contrast. Montfort spent the hours of darkness in anxious preparations and earnest prayer, and in token of the high resolve of his army each soldier painted a white cross on his chest and back. In Henry's camp, and especially in the priory, the night was given over to song and dance and wine-cup revelry. It is true the royalists posted a watch on the hill which overlooked their camp, but towards morning all save one returned to the town, and the solitary sentinel soon fell fast asleep.

\ By sunrise Montfort and his army began their march to Lewes, and in so secret a manner that the sleeping sentinel was taken prisoner and the heights above the town occupied ere the royalists were aware that the enemy was upon them. From the

towers of the castle there floated the banner of the monarch, symbol that it was being held for the king, while the priory was surrounded by a dense crowd of men in warlike array. Once the alarm had been given, the king's knights and soldiers quickly prepared themselves for the inevitable conflict, Prince Edward being conspicuous among the leaders. Indeed, no sooner had the trumpets sounded than he swept forward to the attack, his special objective being that section of Montfort's army which consisted almost entirely of the untrained citizens of London. The young prince had a particular grudge against the citizens of the capital; they had, he thought, insulted his mother; now was his hour of revenge. But his impetuous onslaught was his undoing. The Londoners, unused to the shock of arms, soon broke before the attack, and in a flash were in full retreat. Edward and his men followed, followed for mile after mile, until at length they were far from the battlefield.

¶ This was Montfort's opportunity. One section of the royal army was gone; all that remained for him to do was to hurl his own force forward ere Edward could return. For a time the contest waged stubbornly, but in the end Montfort's superior generalship triumphed, and ere the young prince came back all was over. The barons had won a notable victory, even though they had not been able to capture the castle itself. The king fell a prisoner

into their hands, and Edward himself had to become a hostage for his father's safety. Out of that conflict, as hinted above, there came into existence the first germ of the House of Commons, a fact which enhances the interest of the battlefield beneath the towers of Lewes Castle. For the American pilgrim, too, that scene should possess a singular attraction. It appears to be highly probable that an ancestor of George Washington fought with the barons who triumphed at the Battle of Lewes, a worthy forerunner of that other member of his race who withstood the tyranny of a king.

CHAPTER VII

THE PRISON OF THE MARTYR KING

CARISBROOKE CASTLE

LATE in a November night of the year 1647, Oliver Cromwell, then encamped with his Roundheads at Putney, was the recipient of a startling message. The king, Charles I, was missing from his palace-prison a few miles distant. Summoning a few attendants, the Puritan general was quickly in the saddle and riding in all haste towards Hampton Court.

And when he arrived at that mansion by the side of the Thames, Cromwell learnt that the report was no idle rumour. The king had verily fled. Little by little the story of that night's happenings was unfolded by the valiant Colonel Whalley, who had been made responsible for the safe-keeping of Charles Stuart. It seems that a little before evening prayer the king, as was his wont, had retired to his private chamber, where, however, he stayed longer than usual. At first no importance was attached to his prolonged absence, but as the minutes went by without his return suspicion began to be aroused, and when at length a favourite greyhound was heard to be whining within suspicion gave place to fear that something untoward had happened. A

few days earlier Cromwell had written to Colonel Whalley to warn him that there were rumours abroad “ of some intended attempt on his Majesty’s person; ” was it possible that the attempt had been hazarded and that the king had been assassinated? Alarmed at such a possibility, Colonel Whalley forced an entrance to the king’s retiring room, only to discover that he was missing. A further examination showed that he had left the palace and made his way to a gate in the garden-wall, outside which were the telltale marks of horses’ hoofs.

When he returned to the king’s room Colonel Whalley found that the missing monarch had left several letters on his table, all in the royal handwriting, and one specially addressed to himself. On opening the latter, this is what he read under date of November 11th: “ Colonel Whalley: I have been so civilly used by you and Major Huntington, that I cannot but by this parting farewell acknowledge it under my hand; as also to desire the continuance of your courtesy, by your protecting of my household stuff and moveables of all sorts, which I leave behind me in this house, that they be neither spoiled or embezzled: only there are three pictures here which are not mine, that I desire you to restore; to wit, my wife’s picture in blue, sitting in a chair, you must send to Mistress Kirke; my eldest daughter’s picture, copied by Belcam, to the Countess of Anglesey; and my Lady Stanhope’s picture



CARISBROOKE CASTLE.

to Carry Rawley; there is a fourth which I had almost forgot, it is the original of my eldest daughter (it hangs in this chamber over the board next to the chimney) which you must send to my Lady Aubigny. So, being confident that you wish my preservation and restitution, I rest your friend, Charles R.”

Such was the message Colonel Whalley read by the candle-light of that November night. But below the royal signature there was a postscript. It was not the letter of warning, the king added, which had resolved him to escape; he was loath, he said, “to be made a close prisoner, under pretence of securing my life.” And then there was another afterthought: he had almost forgotten the black greyhound which had been his companion in that place; would he return the dog to the Duke of Richmond?

Among the other letters which Charles had left on his table was one addressed to the two houses of Parliament, the purport of which was somewhat contradictory to the postscript of his epistle to Colonel Whalley, for in that document he remarked that his personal security was the “urgent cause” of his “retirement.” As Cromwell read those words he must have realized that his own warning letter to Colonel Whalley was partially responsible for the king’s resolve to escape, and that consequently he must do his utmost to recover the fugitive. But it was now midnight, and all that was

possible for him to do at such an hour was to pen a letter to the speaker of the House of Commons reporting the stubborn fact that Charles was missing.

\ Cromwell's letter from Hampton Court, written at "Twelve at night," was read in the House of Commons the following day. Prompt action was taken, orders being at once given for the closing of the seaports and for search to be made near and far. As rumour reported that the king was concealed somewhere in London, the Commons ordained that any one guilty of giving him shelter should be punished with loss of estates and life. This was on Friday, but neither on that day nor the next was any news forthcoming as to the king's whereabouts. On Saturday Colonel Whalley was called before the house to give his version of the affair, a proceeding which merely accentuated the fact of the king's disappearance without throwing any light on the mystery as to whither he had gone.

(All that uncertainty was inevitable; when, at nine o'clock on that November night, Charles rode away from Hampton Court he had no definite objective in view. To two of his faithful friends, Sir John Berkeley and John Ashburnham, he had confided his resolve to make an attempt to escape on that Thursday night, but beyond that little had been arranged. The first thing to be accomplished was to get clear of Hampton Court as speedily as possible,

and once that was achieved the three rode hard through the darkness towards the southwest. Where they spent that night is unknown, but some time during the following day the trio arrived at Titchfield House, a "right statlie" mansion within three miles of a river which flows into the Southampton Water. Here, then, the king was in hail of the open sea, over which he could sail away to a sure refuge in France.

\ But it was not to be. It is true the king was overheard to ask Ashburnham "where the ship lay," and that that courtier was absent from Titchfield House for several hours making enquiries for a suitable vessel, but the night closed in again without any good news of that kind being forthcoming. It was at this juncture that one member of the party suggested Carisbrooke Castle in the Isle of Wight as a suitable haven for the king. It was impossible for him to remain long at Titchfield House; his presence there could not be hidden for an indefinite period, and the mansion was ill-adapted to withstand a siege.

\ Now it happened that Carisbrooke Castle was at that time in the charge of Colonel Robert Hammond, a nephew of Dr. Henry Hammond, the devoted chaplain of the king. Charles and Colonel Hammond had already met, for the soldier had been introduced to the king at Hampton Court by his uncle, and introduced as one who, notwithstanding the

part he had taken in the civil war, was now “ a penitent convert.” Hammond, indeed, had grown somewhat out of sympathy with the austere methods which were in favour with the Roundheads and some members of Parliament, and had been glad to exchange the turmoil of London for the more peaceful occupation of the governorship of Carisbrooke Castle. All this was known to Ashburnham, and it seems to have been his suggestion that Charles should cross over to the Isle of Wight and place himself under the protection of Hammond.

Before taking such an irrevocable step, however, it was decided that Ashburnham and Sir John Berkeley should visit Hammond and hear what he had to say. Hammond was startled to learn that the king had escaped from Hampton Court, but when he was further informed that Charles had so good an opinion of him that he was minded to place himself under his protection, he became greatly embarrassed. Quickly recovering some measure of self-possession, however, he answered that if the king were pleased to come thither he would receive and entertain him as well as he could, but he was, after all, no more than an inferior officer, and would be obliged to obey his superiors in whatsoever they commanded. This was hardly what Ashburnham and Berkeley had expected, but, after further debate, they at length consented to conduct Hammond to the king’s hiding-place.

When the party reached Titchfield House, the governor of Carisbrooke Castle was bidden stay below while Ashburnham went to the king's chamber to acquaint him with the result of the mission. Charles was quick-witted enough to realize that his escape had been made in vain. "O Jack," he exclaimed to Ashburnham, "thou hast undone me!" And now Ashburnham comprehended the folly of his action in revealing the king's hiding-place without an assurance from Hammond that he would not deliver him up again to his enemies. To make what amends he could he offered to go down and kill Hammond on the spot, but to that proposal Charles would not listen for a moment. There was nothing to be done now save for him to accompany Hammond to Carisbrooke Castle and hope for the best. This was on Saturday, and the same evening the king crossed to the Isle of Wight, and the following day passed within the gates of Carisbrooke Castle a prisoner once more.

For Hammond did not feel disposed to support the character of a "penitent convert." Once the king had reached the Isle of Wight he immediately wrote to the House of Commons, and that body as promptly enjoined him to keep his uninvited guest securely within the castle. It had been a great "temptation" to the governor of Carisbrooke, as Cromwell frankly admitted in one of his letters to "dear Robin," but something had decided him

against going over to the royalist party. Nor did he lack reward. A few months later Cromwell wrote to "dear Robin" again, this time to assure him that his "business" was done in the House, meaning by "business" that the House of Commons had raised his salary from ten to twenty pounds a week, besides settling upon him and his heirs the comfortable income of five hundred pounds a year. Cromwell piously added that he hoped the Lord would "direct and sustain" him under this addition to his "burden."

Carisbrooke Castle walls were hoary with age when Charles I made their acquaintance as a prisoner. He had known them in happier days. The old records of the parish church tell how, as a lad of nine, he had visited the castle and dined there with his father, James I, and how nine years later he had paid a second visit to the historic building. Antiquarians tell us that the mound on which the castle stands dates from Saxon times, and that it marks the site of that great battle of the year 530 when Cerdic and Cymric "conquered the island of Wight, and slew many men." A Norman castle was reared on this spot before Domesday Book was compiled, while the present keep dates away back to the year 1100. It was here that William the Conqueror laid his half-brother Odo under arrest, and from that time onward it was the scene of many a stirring episode. But to-day its ivy-clad ruins, its



THE KEEP STEPS, CARISBROOKE CASTLE.

crumbling ramparts, its grass-paved tilt-yard, and its stately gate-house are chiefly of interest because they aid the imagination in re-picturing those seventeenth century days when the castle became the last prison of England's martyr king.

As has been noted above, it was on Sunday the fourteenth of November, 1647 that Charles Stuart took up his abode here as the ostensible guest but the veritable prisoner of Colonel Hammond, and here he remained until the opening of those negotiations in the September of the following year which ended in starting him on his journey to the scaffold. At first his custodian disguised the hand of iron with a velvet glove; ten days after his arrival at Carisbrooke he wrote: "I am daily more and more satisfied with this governor; and find these islanders very good, peaceable, and kind people." But it was not long ere he had reason to modify his opinion. Acting on orders from the Parliament, Hammond gradually curtailed the liberty of his guest, and soon the king found his daily exercise restricted to a walk round the ramparts or a stroll in the tilt-yard. And when another attempt at effecting a reconciliation between Charles and his Parliament had ended in failure, the governor of Carisbrooke abruptly dismissed all the king's friends and servants, gave orders that none were to repair to him any more, and mounted a strong guard at the castle gates.

When news of these stringent measures spread through the island one loyal soul was roused to action. There was residing in the adjacent little town of Newport one Captain Burley, a stout-hearted seaman who had fought valiantly for the king through all the years of the civil war. No sooner did he hear that his sovereign was being harshly treated by the governor of the castle than he put himself at the head of a few like-minded spirits and marched through the island with a drum calling for volunteers in the name of "God, the king, and the people." But Colonel Hammond swiftly laid Burley by the heels, sent him in haste to Winchester for trial, and a few days later he was condemned and hanged.

Deprived of the companionship of the faithful Berkeley and Ashburnham and his devoted chaplain, Dr. Henry Hammond, the imprisoned king would have found the time hang heavily on his hands had he not possessed the resources of the educated man. There were few with whom he could hold conversation; of a decrepit old man who lit his fire in the morning he said he was "the best companion I have had for many months;" but he had with him a small library, and when he grew weary of reading he sought relief in writing. The books he read most were Tasso's "Jerusalem Delivered," Spenser's "Faerie Queen," and Hooker's "Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity," the latter being a

work likely to harden him in his opposition to puritanism and all its deeds.

^ In the intervals of his reading or his exercise on the ramparts or at a game at bowls, he was busy with his pen, now framing statements for the Parliament and anon inditing personal letters to his friends and wife and children. But there were hours when it was difficult to address the latter. It was not want of affection, he assured his little daughter Elizabeth, that made him write so seldom, but want of matter such as he could wish. "I am loth," he said, "to write to those I love when I am out of humour (as I have been these days by-past), lest my letters should trouble those I desire to please." To his son and heir, however, who was to succeed him as Charles II, he wrote often and in a noble strain. He solemnly warned him never to aspire to more greatness or prerogative than was really for the good of his subjects, adding, "These considerations may make you a great prince, as your father is now a low one." If God gave him success, let him use it humbly and "far from revenge." If God restored him to his right, whatever he promised let him keep. When he wrote those words Charles had met the representatives of the Parliament for the last time: "The commissioners are gone," he added; "the corn is now in the ground; we expect the harvest."

^ It was not to be long a-reaping. At daybreak two

days after he had penned those words the king heard a loud knocking at his dressing-room door. Enquiry as to who was there elicited the response that some gentlemen of the army desired to speak with the king, and when those officers were admitted they abruptly informed the monarch that they had orders to remove him. "From whom?" he asked, to be answered, "From the army." And whither was he to be taken? "To the castle." But what castle? "The castle," came the reply. "But 'the castle' is no castle," Charles answered. Finally his visitors named Hurst Castle as their destination, and thither the ill-fated monarch was conveyed in the early hours of that December day of 1648. It was the first stage of his journey to that scaffold on which, two months later, he was to win the title of the martyr king.

Tradition still points out the crumbling walls of the rooms which were occupied by Charles during the weary months of his last imprisonment, and the window through which he twice tried to escape; but legend is silent as to which of these ruined chambers witnessed the heavenward flight of the soul of that monarch's gentle-spirited daughter. For, in the summer of 1650, the princess Elizabeth, now in her sixteenth year, was ordered by the Parliament to be sent to the castle which had been her father's prison, no heed being paid to her piteous appeal against being confined in a building of such unhappy

memories. But release was nearer than she knew. While taking exercise one day in the old tilting-yard she was drenched with a sudden summer rain. A chill and a fever followed, and she was found dead with her hands clasped as in prayer, her head resting on the pages of an open Bible. She was buried in the neighbouring church of Newport, where, more than two centuries later, Queen Victoria caused to be built that graceful marble monument which perpetuates the pathos of her death.

CHAPTER VIII

“ NO WORSE DEED WAS EVER DONE ”

CORFE CASTLE

A CENTURY ago it was usual to claim an Anglo-Saxon origin for many of the ancient castles of England; to-day, in the light of surer knowledge, the most enthusiastic topographer hesitates to make such a demand for even the most venerable building. Of course it is admitted that in many cases existing ruins may possibly mark the site on which an Anglo-Saxon structure once stood, but that the edifice itself can be credited with so antique a history is open to grave doubt. For it is now generally agreed that Anglo-Saxon castles were usually made of wood, and it is obvious that such structures have no kinship with the massive stone ruins of Norman days.

Even in those cases where it is highly probable that a Norman fortress was reared on the site of an Anglo-Saxon citadel there is not one where the presumption is so strong as in the example furnished by Corfe Castle. The assertion sometimes made that this building was reared by King Edgar in the tenth century cannot now be accepted, but there is no denying the fact that its site, or the near vicinity of its site, was the scene of a royal tragedy more than

nine centuries ago. The record may be read in the terse sentences of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, where, under the date 978, some old historian set down these words :

“ This year was King Edward slain, at eventide, at Corfe-gate, on the fifteenth day before the calends of April. And he was buried at Wareham without any royal honour. No worse deed than this was ever done by the English nation since they first sought the land of Britain. Men murdered him, but God has glorified him. He was in life an earthly king, he is now after death a heavenly saint. Him would not his earthly relatives avenge, but his heavenly father has avenged him amply. The earthly homicides would wipe out his memory from the earth, but the avenger above him spread his memory abroad in heaven and earth. Those, who would not before bow to his living body, now bow on their knees to his dead bones. Now we may conclude, that the wisdom of men, and their meditations, and their counsels, are as nought against the appointment of God. In this year succeeded Ethelred, his brother, to the government.”

So stands the deposition of that unknown chronicler whose hand has lain idle in the grave for more than nine long centuries. When he wrote his annals some of those implicated in that “ worse deed ” were probably still alive ; hence the reticence of his narrative, the absence of any ascription of blame,

his silence as to the names of those "earthly relatives" who so sadly failed in their duty to the murdered king. But there came a day when the annalists of English history felt at liberty to set down all the truth, and it is from later records that we learn the full details of the story of ambition which led to the murder of Edward the Martyr on that hillside where now stand the ruins of Corfe Castle.

Edgar, king of the English, notwithstanding his many good qualities, was a "slave to lust." Two of his liaisons appear to have been anticipations of the modern trial-marriage type, for in each case the "handfast" union lasted for but a year. It is plain that he was a connoisseur of feminine beauty, for his first wife, the mother of Edward, was known as the "White Duck," and legend has much to say about the romance and tragedy connected with his choice of a second spouse. Report had reached him of the matchless loveliness of Elfrida, the daughter of Ordgar, earl of Cornwall, and he commissioned his favourite Ethelwold to visit the maiden that he might learn the truth about her charms. That was an unfortunate errand for Ethelwold, for no sooner had he gazed upon the fair Elfrida than he was "near mad in love" with her himself. His passion decided him to prove faithless to his king; instead of sustaining the rôle of an ambassador he assumed that of the lover, so prevailing with the maiden and her father that ere he left Ordgar's house he was

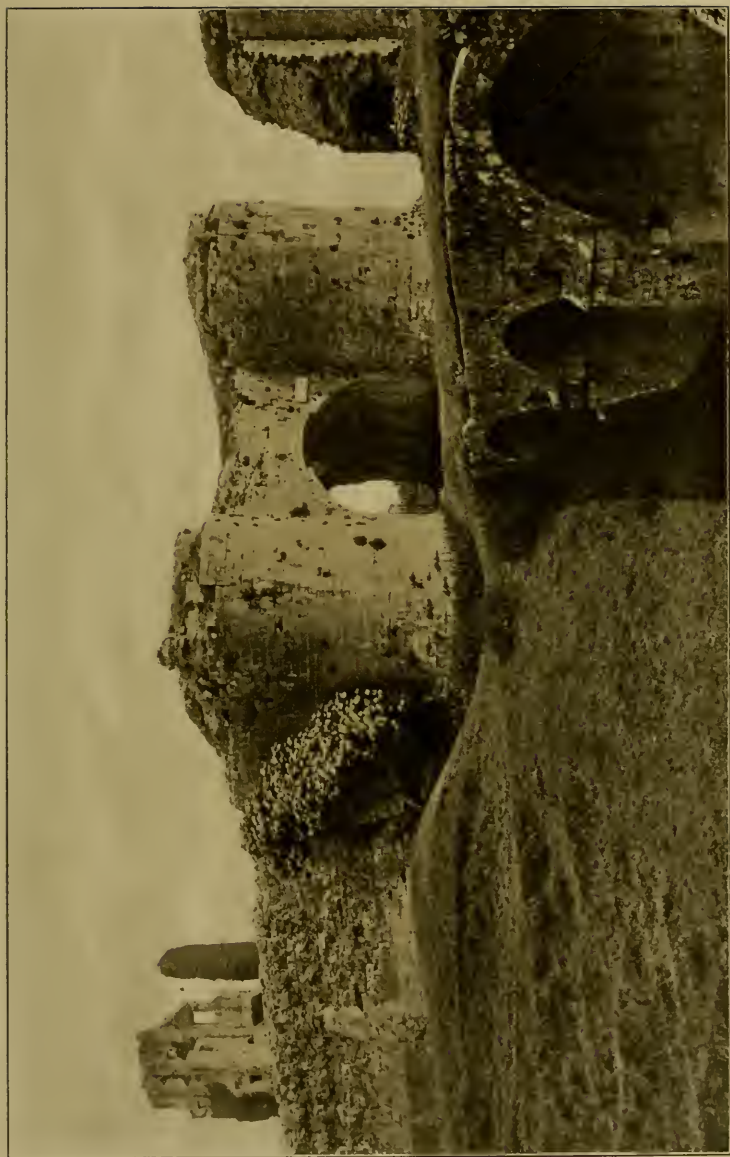
promised Elfrida's hand in marriage, provided he could procure the consent of the king. The tenor of his report to Edgar may be imagined; Elfrida, he said, was no such beauty as had been reported; she might grace the house of a subject, but was no worthy match for a king. The ruse succeeded admirably, and when Ethelwold perceived the king's mind to be “ somewhat alienated from love ” he began “ little by little to entreat him to grant him his goodwill that he might marry her himself.”

So Elfrida became the wife of Ethelwold. But as the wife of the king's favourite she was “ more frequently in the eyes of all men,” and the “ fame of her comeliness daily more and more increased.” Now all this could not be hidden from the king. Once more, then, his curiosity was aroused, but instead of trusting to second-hand reports he determined to investigate for himself. An excuse was easily concocted; a day's hunting on a manor of Ethelwold's would give him an opportunity to form his own opinion as to the beauty of his favourite's wife.

Edgar does not seem to have disguised his intention from his favourite; at any rate Ethelwold became acquainted with the king's resolve and at once realized his danger. In his extremity he appealed to Elfrida herself. Telling her the truth about his visit to her home, he implored her to so attire herself as to conceal her beauty from the king. But

Ethelwold pleaded in vain; angered that she had been robbed of a crown, Elfrida “decked and picked herself in the heartiest manner, like a peacock.” And Edgar succumbed so completely to her charms that shortly after he slew Ethelwold with his own hands and then took his widow for his wife.

But Elfrida’s ambition was not satiated. When Edgar died she would fain have been regent of the kingdom until her seven-year-old son Ethelred should be old enough to reign, and she stoutly opposed that party in the state which insisted that her step-son Edward should be acknowledged king of the land. For a time she was thwarted in her ambition, Edward, a lad of twelve, being duly elected to the throne. There came a day, however, some three years later, when the young Edward, hunting in the vicinity of Corfe, had a sudden inspiration to pay a visit to his step-mother, who was living there with her son Ethelred. News of his approach was imparted to Elfrida, who, as one legend tells, came to meet him on her threshold. And as he sat on horseback to drink the cup of welcome proffered in Elfrida’s name, one of her servants, at her bidding, thrust a knife into his body. Such is the story of a step-mother’s barbarity which lies behind that record in the old chronicle of the earliest tragedy enacted on the site of Corfe Castle, the memory of which is preserved to this day by that St. Edward’s Bridge which spans the moat of the fortress.



ST. EDWARD'S BRIDGE, CORFE CASTLE.

With such an evil deed staining the first pages of its history, there is a sombre appropriateness in the fact that the annals of Corfe Castle enshrine the memory of many tragedies. Of course it must be remembered that the present ruins do not date back to the murder of the youthful Edward; it is true there is a piece of herring-bone masonry in one of the walls for which some authorities claim an Anglo-Saxon ancestry; but the structure as it stands to-day cannot be accorded a longer antiquity than some twenty years subsequent to the Norman Conquest. That it was a secure stronghold by 1106 is obvious from the fact that in that year it was selected by Henry I as the prison of his elder brother Robert, whom he had defeated in battle.

But it was during the reign of King John that Corfe Castle gathered its most prolific harvest of gloomy associations. Arthur, the son of John's elder brother, was the rightful heir to the English throne, a fact which made the lad an important factor in the schemes of those who hated his usurping uncle. It was as a pawn in this game that Prince Arthur was prompted to take arms against John, the issue of which was that he, and his sister Eleanor, and some two hundred knights and nobles of Anjou and Poitiers, were taken prisoners by the English king. Arthur was shortly afterwards murdered, but Eleanor and the knights and nobles were sent as captives to England, the former being

at once confined in Corfe Castle. For a period of her captivity in the Dorsetshire citadel Eleanor, "the Beauty of Brittany" as she was called in tribute to her loveliness, had for companions two of the daughters of the King of Scotland, who were held there as hostages for their father's good behaviour. Three princesses as prisoners at one time help to lighten a little the dark story of other imprisonments within these walls.

No doubt "the Beauty of Brittany" often wondered what fate had befallen the two hundred knights and nobles who had been taken captive at the same time as herself. In due course she was to learn that some two dozen of them were actually sharing her own prison. For history tells how John ordered twenty-four of his captives to be sent to Corfe Castle, and that when they were dispatched thither he sent a letter to the keeper of the fortress commanding him to obey whatever instructions he might be given by word of mouth by the messengers who accompanied the prisoners. Even John, brutal as he was, shrank from writing his commands. For the instructions he had given to his messengers were to the effect that twenty-two of the unfortunate knights were to be immured in the strongest dungeon of the castle and starved to death. And legend affirms that the inhuman order was ruthlessly obeyed.

There was nothing squeamish about King John;

a less scrupulous murderer might have had some qualms about frequenting a building haunted by the ghosts of twenty-two of his victims; but such trifles had no terror for the son of Henry II. That is the only conclusion possible from the fact that Corfe Castle was one of his favourite residences, and was visited by him many times during the last dozen years of his life. He spent a large sum of money on works about the castle, and so firm a belief had he in its strength that he ordered the royal regalia to be kept within its walls. John's queen-consort, the fair Isabella of Angoulême, was also a frequent visitor to Corfe Castle, whither, as old records testify, the good citizens of Winchester sent her many presents.

For many generations, until, indeed, the time of Queen Elizabeth, Corfe Castle remained among the royal possessions of England, but in the fourteenth year of her reign Elizabeth sold the building and its lands to one of her favourites. In 1635 it became the property of Sir John Bankes, Lord Chief Justice of England, whose descendants still count it among their possessions.

Some five and a half centuries of history were vouchsafed the castle ere its career as a strong fortress came to an end. But the climax of its fortunes will preserve its fame in English history as long as its annals are read. At the breaking out of the civil war of the seventeenth century the posses-

sion of this stronghold became a matter of great moment, for, in those days, when artillery was in its infancy, its sturdy walls and secure position made it practically impregnable. Standing on an isolated eminence in a gap of lofty hills, the approach on three sides is exceedingly precipitous, while on the fourth there is the formidable defence of a deep foss. An ancient ground-plan of the castle shows that in the sixteenth century there were no fewer than four wards which an enemy would have to capture before he could reach the massive keep, while the whole area was surrounded by solid walls strengthened by numerous towers of defence.

Such a desirable fortress was naturally envied by the parliamentary forces, and many attempts were made for its capture. The owner, Sir John Bankes, thought it his duty to accompany Charles I when he retired from his capital; his wife, Lady Bankes, deemed it wisest in those unsettled times to repair to Corfe Castle with her children. For some months nothing untoward happened, but on the first of May, 1643, a report reached her to the effect that an attempt was to be made to seize the castle for the Parliament. It seems that by ancient custom the lord of Corfe Castle gave permission for the coursing of a stag on May-day, on which occasion the gentlemen of the Isle of Purbeck followed the hunt in a kind of gala festival. This was the opportunity of the parliamentarians; under



THE KEEP, CORFE CASTLE.

cover of taking part in that ceremony it would be easy, they imagined, to secure the castle. But Lady Bankes was too quick for them; as soon as she heard of their design she recalled all her servants and gave orders for the closing of the castle-gates and denial of admission to all comers.

Having failed in that ruse, they tried another. A few days later a band of forty sailors appeared and requested the delivery of four small cannon which formed part of the armament of the castle; “ but, instead of delivering them, though at that time there were but five men in the castle, yet these five, assisted by the maid-servants at their Lady’s command, mount these pieces on their carriages again, and loading one of them they gave fire, which small thunder so affrighted the seamen that they all quitted the place and ran away.”

Realizing that matters had now taken a serious turn, Lady Bankes exerted herself to prepare the castle for the inevitable siege. By beat of drum she summoned all her loyal tenants, and the neighbourhood was scoured for arms. For a time her efforts were checkmated by the supporters of the Parliament, a large supply of gunpowder being intercepted on its way to the castle, while in the nearest town of Wareham orders were issued that no beer, or beef, or provisions of any kind were to be sold to Lady Bankes or for her use. Soon, too, some of the royal forces were found to be not far distant, and

an urgent message to the commander resulted in Captain Lawrence and a small company of soldiers being sent to garrison the castle.

All these preparations were hardly completed ere an assault was made by a rebel force of some three hundred men, who, however, contented themselves with battering at the fortress from the surrounding hills and setting fire to a few houses in the town. One misty morning in June a more serious enemy gathered around the walls of Corfe, a formidable force of more than five hundred men led by a Sir Walter Earle. "They brought with them to the siege," reported a contemporary account, "a demi-cannon, a culvern, and two sacres; with these, and their small shot, they played on the castle on all quarters of it, with good observation of advantages, making their battery strongest where they thought the castle weakest; and to bind the soldiers by tie of conscience to an eager prosecution of the siege, they administer them an oath, that if they found the defendants hesitate not to yield, they would maintain the siege to victory, and then deny all quarter unto all, killing without mercy men, women, and children."

To protect them in making a closer approach to the walls, the besiegers constructed a Sow and a Boar, two of those old-fashioned military engines which were designed to give shelter to soldiers in using a battering-ram, but the former of these

proved disastrous to most of the men who moved forward with it, for the marksmen within the castle made such good practice on the exposed legs of the besiegers that nine of the eleven ran away “ as well as their battered and broken legs would give them leave.” Having experienced such ill-fortune with the Sow, the Boar was not brought into action. It was safer to pound at the castle from the church tower, where one of the batteries was mounted; and the lead of the roof of that sacred building was torn off to provide cannon-ball. Finally, the men having been inspired with strong waters — or, as the drink is described in an old account of the expenses of the siege, “ a firkin of hot water for the soldiers when they scaled the castle ” — one last desperate effort was made to bring Lady Bankes to bay. The attack was made in two places at once, and while Captain Lawrence soon gave a good account of the assailants who attempted to break into the middle ward, Lady Bankes, with her daughters and women and five soldiers, by casting down stones and hot embers, had little difficulty in repelling the attack on the upper ward. At this juncture news arrived that some royalist forces were advancing, whereupon the leader of the besiegers made “ more haste to convey himself to London than generals use to do who have the care of others.” The siege had lasted six weeks and had ended in a signal triumph for Lady Bankes. It is true that Corfe Castle did finally, by

treachery, fall into the hands of the Parliament, by whose orders it was soon after demolished, but its tottering walls are an eloquent monument to one of the bravest of English Amazons.

CHAPTER IX

ROYAL WINDSOR *WINDSOR CASTLE*

ON all counts Windsor Castle has an undeniable right to the epithet "Royal." No other word so fitly characterizes that majestic pile of buildings on the western bank of the "silver-streaming Thames;" it is royal in its situation; its memories are of kings and queens. From the days of William the Conqueror to the present occupant of the English throne, through changes of dynasty during nine hundred years, it has been linked with the joys and sorrows, the triumphs and defeats of the royal house of Britain. Here have been born scions of that house; here they have plighted their troth in marriage; here they have lain down to die; here not a few have been committed to their eternal rest. Legend persists in carrying the story back to the mythical days of Arthur of the Round Table; surer history makes it the scene of the court of Edward the Confessor; irrefutable fact reveals the figure of the Norman Conqueror as the first tangible founder of this regal home.

For a brief season this picturesque nook of Berk-

shire was counted among the possessions of Westminster Abbey, it having been presented to that house by Edward the Confessor for the "use of those that serve the Lord." But its pleasant situation took the fancy of Norman William; it was, he saw, a place "commodious by the nearness of the river, the forest fit for hunting, and many other particulars therein convenient for kings;" wherefore, as it was also "a place fit for the king's entertainment," he persuaded the abbot of Westminster to exchange that desirable domain for other and larger lands elsewhere.

Camden, who tells the story, adds with truth that "scarce any Royal Seat can certainly have a more pleasant situation. For," he continues, "from an high hill rising with a gentle ascent, it hath an admirable prospect round about. Its front overlooks a long and wide valley, chequered with corn-fields and green meadows, clothed on each side with groves, and watered with the calm and gentle Thames. Behind it arise hills everywhere, neither craggy, nor over-high, adorned with woods, and, as it were, consecrated by nature herself to hunting. The pleasantness of it hath drawn many of our Princes hither, as to a retiring place."

Not content with that tribute in prose, the author of "Britannia" amplified his praise by verse, compelling his muse, as was natural to an Elizabethan, to reach its climax in a pean to the Virgin Queen.



WINDSOR CASTLE.

" Now on the bank fam'd Windsor's towers appear,
 Mount their high tops, and pierce the utmost air.
 At this (but first does Eton's walls salute,
 Where stern Orbilius governs absolute,
 And in proud state his birchen sceptre shakes)
 Thames lifts its azure head, and thus he speaks:
 Windsor, no more thy ancient glories tell,
 No more relate the wonders of thy hill;
 Thy forts, thy fens, thy Chapel's stately pile:
 Thy spires, thy smiling fields, thy happy springs;
 Thy cradles, marriage-beds, or tombs of Kings.
 Forget the knights thy noble stalls adorn,
 The Garter too by them in honour worn:
 Though that great Order sound the first in fame,
 And swells so high with mighty George's name,
 That Burgundy contemns her golden Fleece,
 And the light French their scallop'd chains despise.
 Rhodes, Alcala and Elbe with shame disown
 The painted Crosses on their mantles shown.
 These glories now are all eclipsed by one,
 One honour vies with all thy old renown.
 When on thy courts, and on my bank we see
 Elizabeth (then Thames with bended knee
 Stoops low to pay obeisance to her name;
 And thus goes on, pleas'd with his mighty theme.)
 Elizabeth, whom we, with wonder stile
 The Queen, the Saint, the Goddess of our isle."

To set forth the full details of what an Elizabethan topographer called " the beginnings and increases of this stately College and Castle Royal " would need a ponderous volume, for even the building as it stands to-day represents the additions and transformations of many monarchs from Edward III to Edward VII. It must be remembered, too, that such palace as the Saxon kings had here was

situated at Old Windsor, by the side of "the winding shore" of the Thames; it was due to William the Conqueror that the present site of the castle was selected at what is called New Windsor, while it was not until 1110 that, as Holinshed tells us, "Henry I removed his court from Old to New Windsor, which has ever since continued to be one of the chief royal palaces." Nothing of the castle of Henry I has survived; the oldest portions may include some of the work carried out in the reign of Henry II, but the sovereign of olden days who is most thoroughly represented in the present structure is Edward III.

For it is the great warrior king of the fourteenth century who is usually regarded as the chief builder of England's royal castle. Born here in 1312, and known consequently as Edward of Windsor, the third of the Edwards seems to have cherished a lifelong affection for his birthplace, a passion which explains his resolve to rear a building worthy of his royal race. In the uncertain chronology of the castle it is difficult to specify actual dates, but there seems good reason to believe that it was about the year 1348 that a beginning was made with the reconstruction of the building, and that a start was made with the Round Tower, which, according to one theory, Edward needed as a meeting-place for his Knights of the Garter. Although the height of that tower has been increased in more modern

times, much of its lower portion dates back to the fourteenth century, while some of the woodwork of the interior is of the Edwardian age. To this "lofty tower" indeed Otway's lines may still be applied:

"Beauteous in strength, the work of long-past years,
Old as his noble stem, who there bears sway,
And, like his loyalty, without decay.
This goodly ancient frame looks as it stood
The mother pile, and all the rest her brood.
So careful watch she seems to keep,
While underneath her wings the mighty sleep."

Among the old records of the fourteenth century may yet be read some curious details of the building carried on at Windsor by the command of Edward III. The power of the state was invoked to secure a plentiful supply of workmen, for writs were issued to the sheriffs of various counties bidding them, under a penalty of a hundred pounds, to provide a certain number of labourers, and those artisans had to give security that they would not leave Windsor without the consent of the clerk of the works, who was none other than the famous William of Wykeham. Notwithstanding that binding agreement, some of the workmen did steal away, tempted by higher wages than those paid by the king, a desertion which led to the issuing of writs for their arrest and the punishment of any who had employed them. At one period during the re-building the

supply of labourers was seriously diminished by an outbreak of the plague, but at that juncture Edward issued new orders to his sheriffs commanding them to furnish him with substitutes or pay a penalty of two hundred pounds. The number of workmen employed was at one time as high as three hundred and sixty, yet notwithstanding that little army the structure remained unfinished at the death of Edward.

This was all to the good of one Geoffrey Chaucer, who, in 1389, was appointed by Richard II as clerk of the works at the unfinished castle. He did not hold the post for long; and in truth he was better employed in writing poetry than in supervising the labours of stone-masons and carpenters. Yet it adds a keen interest to these grey walls to recall that the process of their building was watched by the author of the "Canterbury Tales."

Many of the succeeding sovereigns of England added their quota to the adornment of this royal castle. To Edward IV is due the noble St. George's Chapel; Henry VII began that tomb-house which is now the resting-place of so many of his descendants; the massive gateway, which is the chief entrance to the lower ward, was the work of Henry VIII; the spacious North Terrace from whence there is so ravishing a view of Eton and the winding Thames and the lovely landscape beyond was built by the command of Queen Elizabeth; while in their turn,



ST. GEORGE'S CHAPEL, WINDSOR CASTLE.

Charles II, Queen Anne, George IV, Queen Victoria, and Edward VII contributed not a little to the aspect of the castle buildings as they stand to-day.

Apart from the Round Tower, which dominates the castle from whatever point of view it is surveyed, the most glorious of all the buildings is that St. George's Chapel, which is peculiarly the holy of holies of the Knights of the "most noble Order of the Garter." The poet Otway included that famous shrine in his itinerary of the castle and admitted that it was "too noble to be well described or praised." But the lines in which he gave voice to his sensations as he gazed into the chaped might have been written in recent days.

"Before the door, fix'd in an awe profound,
I stood, and gaz'd with pleasing wonder round,
When one approach'd who bore much sober grace,
Order and ceremony in his face;
A threatening rod did his dread right hand poise,
A badge of rule and terror o'er the boys:
His left a massy bunch of keys did sway,
Ready to open all to all that pay.
This courteous 'squire, observing how amaz'd
My eyes betray'd me as they wildly gaz'd,
Thus gently spoke: 'These banners rais'd on high
Betoken noble vows of chivalry;
Which here their heroes with Religion make,
When they the ensigns of this order take.'
Then in due method made me understand
What honour fam'd St. George has done our land;
What toils he vanquish'd, with what monsters strove;
Whose champions since for virtue, truth, and love,
Hang here their trophies, while their generous arms
Keep wrong suppress, and innocence from harms."

Although tradition affirms that the earliest use of the Round Tower was as a meeting-place for the Knights of the Garter, it was not long ere that massive building became the chief prison of the castle. One of its first and most notable captives was James I of Scotland, who was detained prisoner in England for full nineteen years. During that period he made the acquaintance of many a fortress, being removed to Windsor in 1417 and remaining there until his marriage and release in 1424. The old romances tell that it was from this Round Tower he caught his first glimpse of the lovely Jane Beaufort, daughter of the Duke of Somerset, a vision which enkindled love and inspired him to sing "the Kingis Quair" in praise of his enslavement to that fair maiden. Perhaps this is to read literalism into a flight of fancy, and yet the most severe critics have come to the conclusion that the tender lines in which James described how he was overcome with "pleasance and delyte" by the vision of the graceful maiden walking in the garden under his prison window represent the poet's own experience. There is truth in the story, however, as well as romance, for James did win the Lady Jane for his bride, and was so faithful to his love that it is recorded of him that almost alone of Scottish kings he had no mistress and no bastards.

A more sombre story of imprisonment and fiendish cruelty is associated by some annalists with the

evil name of King John. It tells how the wife of William de Braose and her children were immured here with a sheaf of wheat and a piece of raw bacon as their sole food, and that when their cell was opened eleven days later they were all dead. That was in the days before Edward III's re-building, for it was the older Windsor Castle in which John held his court and from whence he went to and fro to that meeting of his barons at Runnymede where he was forced to adhibit his name to Magna Charta.

More picturesque is the chronicle of the captivity of the poetic Earl of Surrey, who made the acquaintance of the Round Tower in 1537 because he had, in the park of Hampton Court, struck a courtier who had charged him with being in sympathy with some of the rebels of the king. To be a prisoner at Windsor was a decided novelty for Surrey, remembering that, by the special desire of Henry VIII, he had spent several years of his boyhood there as the companion of that monarch's natural son, the Duke of Richmond. Doubtless Surrey's five months' imprisonment was not a serious affair; at any rate he seems to have had ample opportunity to cultivate the poetic muse during his confinement. If his love-sonnets in praise of the Lady Geraldine were not written in the Round Tower, as some authorities assure us, it is beyond question that it was within its walls he composed his quaint "Prisoner

in Windsor, He Recounteth His Pleasure there Passed."

Naturally the earl's thoughts reverted to those happier days when he was the playmate of a king's son, who, but a year past, had been laid in his untimely grave.

" O place of bliss! renewer of my woes!
Give me account, where is my noble fere?
Whom in thy walls thou didst each night enclose;
To other lief: but unto me most dear.
Echo, alas! that doth my sorrow rue,
Returns thereto a hollow sound of plaint.
Thus I alone, where all my freedom grew,
In prison pine, with bondage and restraint."

Surrey's picturesque lines must always have a prominent place in the anthology of Windsor Castle, for the memories they enshrine of his companionship with Henry's son are full of the light and colour of the first half of the sixteenth century. It is a sunny landscape of youth in love and at play painted against the background of the ancient walls or set amid the green spaces of its gardens.

" The large green courts, where we were wont to hove,
With eyes upcast unto the maiden's tower,
And easy sighs, such as folk draw in love.
The stately seats, the ladies bright of hue,
The dances short, long tales of great delight;
With words and looks that tigers could but rue,
When each of us did plead the other's right.
The palm play, where dèsportèd for the game,
With dazed eyes oft we, by gleams of love,
Have miss'd the ball, and got sight of our dame,
To bait her eyes, which kept the leads above.

The gravell'd ground, with sleeves tied on the helm,
 On foaming horse with swords and friendly hearts;
 With cheer as though one should another whelm,
 Where we have fought, and chased oft with darts.
 With silver drops the meads yet spread for ruth;
 In active games of nimbleness and strength,
 Where we did strain, trained with swarms of youth,
 Our tender limbs that yet shot up in length.
 The secret groves, which oft we made resound
 Of pleasant plaint, and of our ladies' praise;
 Recording soft what grace each one had found,
 What hopes of speed, what dread of long delays.
 The wild forèst, the clothed holts with green;
 With reins avail'd, and swift ybreathed horse,
 With cry of hounds, and merry blasts between,
 Where we did chase the fearful hart of force.
 The void walls eke that harbour'd us each night:
 Wherewith, alas! revive within my breast
 The sweet accord, such sleeps as yet delight;
 The pleasant dreams, the quiet bed of rest;
 The secret thoughts, imparted with such trust;
 The wanton talk, the divers change of play;
 The friendships sworn, each promise kept so just,
 Wherewith we passed the winter nights away."

Twelve years later the youthful legitimate son of Henry VIII, now King Edward VI, was to be held almost as a prisoner within his own castle walls. Late on an October night the protector Somerset, who had Edward in his charge, took alarm at the threatening attitude of his enemies, and resolved to remove with his royal ward from Hampton Court to the more secure haven of the castle at Windsor. The young king was in bed afflicted with a bad cough and cold, but despite that fact Somerset forced him

to arise and accompany him on a night ride to the castle by the Thames. But the power of Somerset was soon broken, and in welcoming his deliverance the ailing young monarch uttered the melancholy complaint: "Methinks I am in prison: here be no galleries nor gardens to walk in."

Far more pathetic are the Windsor memories of that other king, Charles I, whose beheaded corpse lies in the vaults beneath St. George's Chapel. It was in July, 1647, the ill-fated monarch paid his penultimate visit to the royal castle of his ancestors. He was a prisoner of the Parliament, a fact which encouraged the governor of the castle in his high-handed treatment. For the loyal inhabitants of Windsor had signalized their king's arrival in their midst by the ringing of bells and the making of bonfires, much to the wrath of the governor of the castle, who threatened them with condign punishment. Charles was still hopeful of better days, nor was his spirit crushed. "Mr. Governor," he said, on learning what that official had threatened, "I hear of such and such matters you intend to do, but be well advised of it, for I go not so far off, neither intend I to stay so long hence, but that I may return soon enough to make you repent of it if for showing their loves to me you cause one hair of their heads to perish." A few days later Charles was taken to Hampton Court, whence, as recorded in a previous chapter, he made that ill-planned attempt

to escape from the power of the Parliament and army.

Yet once more, in the December of 1648, was the doomed king to dwell for a brief space within the walls of Windsor Castle, this time as a prisoner more closely guarded and but a little removed from the scaffold which was to end all. Surely it was a refinement of cruelty on the part of the army leaders which prompted them to select such a place for their captive's safe-keeping. Here, however, in the palace where he had known far happier days, Charles Stuart was fated to pass his "sorrowful and last Christmas," and it was from Windsor that, on a January day, he was escorted to his mock-trial and the headsman's block.

These happenings, however, are the shadow of the picture; to most minds it will be pleasanter to dwell upon those traditions of Windsor which are brightened by the light and colour of the days of chivalry. Many a glorious festival of knightly tournament and regal revelry has left its impress on the stately annals of the castle; here, too, have passed the joyous ceremonies of royal betrothals and weddings, or the splendid days of stately hospitality. Thus in the glowing pages of the chronicle Hall may be read how Henry VIII royally entertained at his castle of Windsor the Emperor Charles V in the summer of 1522. In the daytime the two monarchs hunted; when night fell there were plays and

masques and banquets. After one play, Hall records, there was "a sumptuous Masque of twelve men and twelve women, the men had on garments of cloth of gold and silver loose laid on crimson satin, knit with points of gold, bonnets, hoods, buskins, all of gold. The ladies were in the same suit which was very rich to behold, and when they had danced, then came in a costly banquet and a basket of spices, and so departed to their lodging."

Copious as are the annals of such gorgeous doings, the records of the early domestic history of royal Windsor are exceedingly scanty. One pleasant glimpse, however, of a queen spending a quiet and happy month here away from the cares and shows of state is afforded by the quaint entries day by day of the privy purse expenses of Elizabeth of York, the fair and gentle and kindly-hearted consort of Henry VII. It was on a mid-June day of 1502 that the queen journeyed from Richmond to Windsor, and there she remained until the nineteenth of the following month. Her progress was marked by alms-giving, for one item in her expenses shows how a certain sum was handed to her footman to be "given in alms by the commandment of the queen." Hardly had she reached the castle than the ministers of the king's chapel were presented with twenty shillings "to drink at a tavern with a buck," a feast held, no doubt, in honour of the queen's return. On many days during that summer visit, the last Eliz-

abeth was to pay to that royal home, she was the recipient of various presents, now an offering of cherries from the Mayor of London, anon a gift of cakes and apples, another day a popinjay from some donor unnamed, and frequently a buck or two for the royal table. Once the queen made a little excursion to a hermit's cell near Windsor, giving the hermit a shilling in alms and fourpence to "a poor man that guided the queen's grace thither." Another entry tells how four shillings and fourpence were paid to certain labourers "to make a harbour in the little park of Windsor for a banquet for the queen," a record which suggests a charming picture of a happy *al fresco* festival. Ere another year went by the beautiful Elizabeth had been laid to her rest in the abbey of Westminster.

During the Commonwealth the history of royal Windsor is mainly that of a prison. Cromwell was satisfied with Hampton Court and Whitehall as his chief residences; perhaps Windsor was too reminiscent of his royal victim; but the Round Tower and other strong places in the castle by the Thames were much used for the confinement of troublesome royalists. It was during these days of its suspended glory that Evelyn paid his first visit to the castle. He admired the stonework of St. George's Chapel, but of the principal building all he could record in his diary was that the rooms were "melancholy and of antient magnificance." Many of the treas-

ures of the castle had been ruthlessly despoiled by the grim Puritans; they ransacked the wardrobe of tapestries and carpets, stripped the Garter room of its banners and hangings and pictures, and carried off countless other treasures. Nor did they stop there; they rifled even the tombs of the dead, laying unholy hands upon the adornments of that masoleum which Wolsey had prepared for his own sepulture.

With the restoration of Charles II there opened a happier chapter in the annals of royal Windsor, even though it was not until nearly ten years later that the "Merry Monarch" set himself seriously to the task of repairing the havoc wrought by the Cromwellians. To this transition period belongs the lively record which Pepys made of the visit he and his wife paid in the late winter of 1666.

He rose early on that February day and travelled to Windsor by coach. Putting up at the Garter inn, he "sent for Dr. Childe, who came to us and carried us to St. George's Chapel, and there placed us among the Knights' stalls. And pretty the observation," so he wrote in his diary, "that no man, but a woman, may sit in a Knight's place, where any brass plates are set; and hither come cushions to us, and a young singing-boy to bring us a copy of the anthem to be sung. And here, for our sakes, had this anthem and the great service sung extraordinary, only to entertain us. . . . Was shown where

the late King is buried, and King Henry the Eighth, and my Lady Seymour. This being done, to the King's house, and to observe the neatness and contrivance of the house and gates: it is the most romantic castle that is in the world. But, Lord! the prospect that is in the balcony in the Queen's lodgings, and the terrace and walk, are strange things to consider, being the best in the world, sure." Pepys was so pleased with his visit that he did not complain at having to give "a great deal of money to this and that man and woman;" he found, like Otway and the modern visitor, that there were plenty of attendants "ready to open all to all that pay."

Some two years later, when Charles II had begun to realize, like William the Conqueror, that Windsor was a "fit place for the king's entertainment," and that it was, above all, an ideal summer residence, an earnest beginning was made on the work of repairs. The place was, as Evelyn noted, "exceedingly ragged and ruinous," and the renovation proved a protracted task. Indeed the work was not completed until 1683, when Charles was drawing near the end of his reign. Architectural purists have criticized the restoration carried out by the second Charles, but Evelyn was delighted with everything he saw. He was moved to enthusiasm by the "incomparable fresco painting" in St. George's Hall, and had no fault to find with the

other improvements. "There was now," he wrote, "the terrace brought almost round the old Castle; the grass made clean, even, and curiously turfed; the avenues to the new park, and other walks, planted with elms and limes, and a pretty canal, and receptacle for fowls; nor less observable and famous is the throwing so huge a quantity of excellent water to the enormous height of the Castle, for the use of the whole house." King Charles often travelled to Windsor by barge, a delightful and picturesque if somewhat leisurely mode of transit, but one which, as the pilgrim by modern steamboat will admit, shows the noble building to the best advantage as the journey's end draws near.

Although the lover of Nell Gwynne generally lived "quite privately" at Windsor, amusing himself by fishing or strolling in the beautiful grounds, there were occasions when his visits to his Thames-side castle were fraught with danger. One plot against his life was intended to be carried out here by four ruffians; on another occasion, when the supporters of his natural son, the Duke of Monmouth, were doing their best to force Charles to declare him his heir, an angry petition fell at his feet as he passed the Round Tower while walking in his grounds. Charles, however, was to be justified of his belief that no one would kill him to make his brother James king.

When that brother did succeed to the throne as



THE EAST TERRACE, WINDSOR CASTLE.

James II he was not destined to enjoy for long the pleasures of Windsor Castle. A little more than three years later, indeed, William of Orange had landed in England, and ere he had been in the country a couple of months he is found issuing orders as though Windsor had belonged to him all his life. It appears that a shipload of red deer had arrived in the Thames from Germany, and the whole cargo was despatched to Windsor forest "by his Royal Highness's order, the Prince of Orange." The memory of William's wife sister, Queen Anne, is perpetuated by the famous Long Walk, while an inedited document preserves an elaborate list of the sentinels of the Foot Guards who were to be posted about the castle on the occasion of the queen's birthday in 1713. All the gates were to have their guardians, the stairs were to be kept clear "from any ordinary people," and her majesty's garden house was to be watched all day by a subaltern and thirty men. If the day did not pass without "disorder" it could not be blamed to the fault of the officer who drew up that list of sentinels.

Eighteenth century associations of royal Windsor are chiefly concerned with several rather unroyal personages of the house of Hanover. First on the list came that elector who had the good fortune to ascend the English throne as George I, a man who "had no notion of what is princely" and was as commonplace in his person as his speech was

awkward. It is distinctly amusing to learn, on the authority of a contemporary letter, that this first of the Georges was "perfectly well pleased" with Windsor, though he thought it would be more agreeable if the game supply were larger. It is needless to dwell upon the Windsor memories of the three succeeding Georges; in the service of romance it is fitter for the imagination to linger over those more distant ages when the masters of this stately palace were indubitably royal.

CHAPTER X

A FORTRESS OF MAGNA CHARTA DAYS

COLCHESTER CASTLE

MOST ancient towns in England can boast the possession of a museum in which the proofs of its antiquity are displayed and labelled for the information of the curious, but few of those depositories can vie with that which is preserved at Colchester, the historically famous county town of Essex. Collected by the labours of the Essex Archæological Society, the various objects in the museum tell a mutely eloquent story of the long centuries which have elapsed since the first human community was founded here on that River Coln which flows out into the North Sea. That hoard of ancient treasures includes countless objects of Roman origin, urns, and bricks, and fragments of tesselated pavements, and statues, and lamps, and coins, and rings, and medals. Nor is it alone in the museum that the modern visitor can gaze upon authentic relics of the far-off days of the Roman occupation of Britain; in the remains of the town walls, in the masonry of one or two churches, and, above all, in the stonework of the venerable castle, the trained eye can still detect specimens of brickwork of Roman manufacture.

Some enthusiastic antiquaries have claimed a Roman origin for the castle itself. It is well known that the grotesque and pedantic Claudius was decreed divine honours after his death, a cynical recompense for his removal by poison, and the theory is advanced that Colchester Castle was built originally as a temple of Claudius, and that the vaulted room usually described as the chapel was really the podium in front of the adytum of the shrine. Whatever be the truth of this surmise, there is far stronger evidence for the assertion that Colchester, which is now identified with the Roman town of Camulodunum, was founded by Claudius and populated by a large number of Romans who had been discharged from military service.

But, according to the old chronicles, the royal associations of Colchester began in the pre-Roman period. The early British kings are shadowy persons; dates and places are sadly lacking in their biographies; yet those of their number who figure in a serious dictionary of biography are entitled to respectful consideration. Among these a definite place is given to that monarch whom Shakespeare has immortalized in his "Cymbeline," but whose historic name was Cunobelinus. Nothing is known of his father or mother; the year of his birth is not even guessed at; the date of his death is given with a query; but it is accepted that during one period of his reign Cunobelinus had his chief residence at



COLCHESTER CASTLE.

Colchester. His possessions were so large that he was the leading British king of his age, and perhaps he might have founded an enduring dynasty had it not been for Claudius's conquest of Britain.

Another and more substantial figure is also associated with the earliest history of Colchester. Less than twenty years after the conquest of Claudius the power of Rome was challenged by an angry revolt of the British tribes. One of the most faithful of the allies of the conquerors was Prasutagus, the king of the Iceni, who, at his death, to secure some of his property to his widow and daughters, made the Roman emperor joint heir to his possessions. But the plan failed; the imperial representative laid claim to everything; and when Boadicea, the widow of Prasutagus, ventured to remonstrate, she was scourged as a common slave. Nor was that all; her daughters were violated by the Roman officers, an outrage which gave her an additional incentive to revenge. Hence the rebellion of the heroic queen. In the absence of the Roman governor, she raised her standard and soon rallied a large force of natives, all of whom had been oppressed beyond endurance by their Roman conquerors. The brunt of the first attack fell upon the colony at Colchester, where the temple to Claudius was laid in ruins and the whole town reduced to ashes. It is true Boadicea was at last defeated, but her amazonian hero-

ism, and especially her destruction of Camulodunum, will perpetuate her fame for all time.

Legend has yet another story to tell of the Colchester of the Roman days. According to this tradition a British prince named Coel had been entrusted with the government of Camulodunum, but took advantage of the divided state of the empire to declare his independence, and establish himself as a non-tributary king. It was to overthrow this usurper that Constantius Chlorus led a Roman army to the walls of Colchester, where, however, he was himself overcome by the fairness of Coel's daughter Helena, "a virgin of wondrous goodly beauty." So Constantius made peace with Coel on condition that he was given his daughter as his bride, and the story tells that from that union was born, in the besieged town itself, that son of Helena who is illustrious as Constantine the Great. Helena, it is added, afterwards went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, where she discovered the true Cross, the memory of which is preserved by the Cross which figures in the Colchester borough arms.

Although many of the objects in the town museum undoubtedly belong to the Roman period, and cannot fail to have an intense interest for all who are imaginative enough to be able to reconstruct a picture of the past by their aid, the theory which finds a Roman temple in the Norman castle of Colchester presents too many difficulties to warrant belief.

According to the evidence of such records as have survived, plus the testimony of architecture, the building does not date any further back than the early years of the twelfth century. It is no doubt true that the builders availed themselves of much old material, for the walls are formed of a mixture of Roman brick and flints, but the style of the keep, which is the only portion that has survived, is too much in harmony with other indubitably Norman castles to leave any room for doubt as to the period when it was erected. Whatever the exact date of its construction, it had been made a formidable stronghold by the time King John and his barons were in deadly conflict about the Great Charter.

That struggle was inevitable; to the modern mind the chief marvel is that it was so long delayed. The causes which led to the charter of English liberties were many, but they all had their root in the intolerable tyranny of the Norman kings. The shadow of that tyranny darkens the pages of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: "God sees the wretched people most unjustly oppressed; first they are despoiled of their possessions, then murdered. This was a grievous year. Whoever had any property lost it by heavy taxes and unjust decrees." Justice was bought and sold; an heir and his land were disposed of to the highest bidder; permission to marry had to be purchased from the king; and the monarch demanded what taxes he thought fit to ap-

praise. All this reached its climax in the reign of John, a prince, as Hallam said, "utterly contemptible for his folly and cowardice." When to his exactions he added the debauchery of his nobles' wives and daughters, the storm burst.

And a part of that storm broke on the walls of Colchester Castle. When the barons learnt that their king was raising forces for their repression, they each undertook the defence of a definite district of the country, in pursuit of which obligation it fell to the lot of Saer de Quincy, the first Earl of Winchester, to attack the castle of Colchester. For John had had the forethought to dismiss the custodian of that fortress and give it into the charge of a Fleming upon whose faithfulness he could rely, besides sending from London a good supply of military engines and engineers. Notwithstanding that preparation, the castle seems to have fallen an easy prey to De Quincy, who, however, was in turn attacked by the siege train which had been so successful in reducing Rochester Castle. The defence was stubborn, so stubborn that John himself came to direct the operations; but De Quincy held out for nearly two months, and then seems to have escaped safely to France.

On the renewal of the war, which followed hard upon John's violating his vow to observe the conditions of Magna Charta, Colchester Castle was besieged once more, this time by the Dauphin of



THE INTERIOR OF THE KEEP, COLCHESTER CASTLE.

France, who had been invited to displace John on the English throne. This third attack does not appear to have been of long duration, and when the fortress was surrendered Louis ran up the flag of France on its battlements with his own hands. That anomaly, however, was soon ended, for on the death of John and the accession of Henry III the barons, having made a friendly arrangement with the Dauphin, realized that the wisest plan was for them to rely upon themselves rather than upon foreign assistance for the protection of their liberties. This turn of affairs left De Quincy free to fulfill his vow as a crusader, but the defender of Colchester Castle fell sick and died soon after he reached the Holy Land in 1219.

Many generations were to elapse ere another occupant of the English throne visited the ancient castle of Colchester. And this time it was a queen, the first queen-regnant of the land, namely Henry VIII's daughter Mary. Cut off from the succession by her brother, Edward VI, whether by his own will or at the instigation of his chief adviser, it was only by the prompt action of her friends that she was able to defeat the supporters of Lady Jane Grey. No doubt it was a surprise to her that the protestant town of Colchester cast in its lot with those other towns which upheld her title to the throne, in recognition of which loyalty Mary paid a special visit to the town on her way to London. The mayor

and corporation, blissfully ignorant of the religious persecutions which were to be inflicted on their townsfolk years later, did their best to show their appreciation of the visit, presenting the queen with a silver cup and a purse containing twenty pounds in gold, besides providing a generous feast of beef and veal and wine for Mary and her attendants.

Less than a century later the Essex town was to undergo one more baptism of fire owing to the differences of king and people. In the summer of 1648 the friends of Charles I decided that it might yet be possible to re-establish the cause of their sovereign, and when the natives of Kent were stirred to take arms against the Parliament once more Sir Charles Lucas persuaded the Essex royalists to make yet another appeal to arms. It was owing to the influence of Lucas that the town of Colchester was seized in the name of the king and then held against a large parliamentary force commanded by Fairfax. A contemporary account of the siege describes how the royalists, like the Jews in Jerusalem, with their swords in one hand and their trowels in the other "began to repair the ruins of our walls which were many," and how a search through the town for arms, ammunition and food revealed but scanty supplies. But they made a brave defence, and even when the allowance of bread was reduced to seven ounces a day it was "received without murmuring." The inhabitants were in a different case;

they were reduced to such extremities that they had to eat soap and candles; and at length nothing remained but surrender. It had been an eleven weeks' task for the besiegers, one of whom, in typically pious phrase, wrote his wife a full account of what God had done "by weak arms." The same devout chronicler also told how "Sir Charles Lucas and Sir George Lisle were both harquebusierd this afternoon." In other words, notwithstanding that the terms of capitulation implied that quarter would be given to all, the two gallant defenders were posted against the north wall of the castle and shot down like dogs by three files of musketeers. And for many generations the people of Colchester were wont to point to a bare spot of earth beside the castle wall as proof that nature so abhorred that deed that it refused to cover it with an obliterating mantle of grass. Yet that murder was perpetrated by men who were always prating about their belief in "a God of love!"

CHAPTER XI

A COSTLY GUEST

HEDINGHAM CASTLE

ALTHOUGH it is by virtue of two visits, one from a queen and the other from a king, that Hedingham Castle can claim a place among the royal castles of England, it must be admitted that on its own account, as the chief fortress and principal residence of the illustrious family of De Vere, the handsome Norman keep that still stands in stately pride near the River Colne in the north of the county of Essex must always be an object of absorbing interest to all lovers of romance. Even if it were not for the ornate tombs of "ladies dead and lovely knights" which survive in village church or city minster, that massive building will preserve for many a century the memory of a family distinguished above most noble lineages not only for the fame of many of its scions but also for the fact that the De Veres held one earldom in the male line for more than five and a half centuries.

It was in connection with the last of that race that Macaulay penned his glowing eulogy of the family, a eulogy which, despite several small inaccuracies, is still the best summary of the services and genius of the De Veres. "The noblest subject in Eng-



FROM AN OLD ENGRAVING

HEDINGHAM CASTLE.

land," the historian wrote, "and indeed, as Englishmen loved to say, the noblest subject in Europe, was Aubrey de Vere, the twentieth and last of the old Earls of Oxford. He derived his title, through an uninterrupted male descent, from a time when the families of Howard and Seymour were still obscure, when the Nevilles and Percies enjoyed only a provincial celebrity, and when even the great name of Plantagenet had not yet been heard in England. One of the chief of the house of De Vere had held high command at Hastings: another had marched, with Godfrey and Tancred, over heaps of slaughtered Moslem, to the sepulchre of Christ. The first Earl of Oxford had been the minister of Henry Beauclerc. The third Earl had been conspicuous among the lords who extorted the Great Charter from John. The seventh Earl had fought bravely at Cressy and Poitiers. The thirteenth Earl had, through many vicissitudes of fortune, been the chief of the party of the Red Rose, and had led the van on the decisive day of Bosworth. The seventeenth Earl had shone at the court of Elizabeth, and had won for himself an honourable place among the early masters of English poetry. The nineteenth Earl had fallen in arms for the Protestant religion and for the liberties of Europe under the walls of Maestricht." It would have heightened Macauley's picture had he reminded his reader of the startling contrast between the first and the last of the De

Veres, for while the founder of the family renounced his vast possessions and took the habit of a monk, the last of his descendants was sufficiently lax in his morals to win a conspicuous place in the spicy "Memoirs" of Count Grammont.

Such a historic peerage, the succession of which continued from 1142 to 1703, would naturally appeal to Macaulay's sense of the picturesque; but he was not the first eulogist of the family, for when, in 1626, there was a dispute about the rightful heir to the title, the Lord Chief Justice, Sir Randolph Crew, waxed eloquent in praise of the antiquity of the De Vere line. After describing how the founder came in with the Conqueror, Sir Randolph sketched the history of the race in outline, and then added: "This great honour, this high and noble dignity hath continued ever since in the remarkable surname of De Vere, by so many ages, descents and generations, as no other kingdom can produce such a peer in one and the self-same name and title. I find in all this length of time but two attainders of this noble family, and those in stormy and tempestuous times, when the government was unsettled, and the kingdom in competition. I have laboured to make a covenant with myself that affection may not press upon judgment, for I suppose there is no man that hath any apprehension of gentry or nobleness, but his affection stands to the continuance of so noble a name and house, and would take hold of

a twig or a twine thread to uphold it. And yet, Time hath his revolutions; there must be a period and end to all things temporal, an end of names and dignities and whatsoever is *terrene*, and why not of De Vere? For where is Bohun? Where is Mowbray? Where is Mortimer? Nay, which is more and most of all, where is Plantagenet? They are entombed in the urns and sepulchres of mortality! And yet let the name and dignity of De Vere stand so long as it pleaseth God." Notwithstanding that pious hope, some seventy years later the name of De Vere was also entombed in the urns and sepulchres of mortality.

But the fame of the name and the peerage has continued unabated to modern times. When Tennyson elected to write a dramatic poem about a "daughter of a hundred earls" he christened his heroine "Lady Clara Vere de Vere," while the honour of being able to use the title of the Earl of Oxford is held in such high esteem that even a duke has laid claim to being the lineal descendant of its former owners.

Had the line continued to this day its representative would have been a unique link with the Norman Conquest, for there is no denying that the De Vere estates in Essex were part of the reward for the services of Aubrey de Vere at the battle of Hastings. In view of his monkish end he is hardly likely to have begun the building of Hedingham Castle;

most probably that stronghold was erected by the Aubrey who died in 1141. It was his son, another Aubrey, who was created Earl of Oxford in 1142, though some have dated the title from a charter of fourteen years later. In any case, the dignity was held by the family for an unprecedented period.

Many of the lords of Hedingham Castle played a conspicuous part in the affairs of their native land, for, in addition to those enumerated by Macaulay, it deserves to be remembered that the fifth Earl sided with Simon de Montfort in his opposition to Henry III, while the ninth earl attained a bad pre-eminence as a favourite of Richard II and was the first marquis created by an English king. While, too, the historian celebrated the thirteenth earl for his loyalty to the cause of the Red Rose, he omitted to note that his father and brother paid a far higher price for their faithfulness, inasmuch as they were beheaded for their adherence to the house of Lancaster. Perhaps, however, the two scions of the De Vere race who occupy the largest space in English history were John the thirteenth and Edward the seventeenth earls, the former being one of the most valiant among the supporters of Henry VII and the latter a notable figure in the "spacious days" of Elizabeth.

Much celebrated for his hospitality, and praised as "a brave, wise, magnificent, learned, and religious man," John de Vere gave many proofs of his

high courage. Leading the van of the Red Rose forces at the battle of Barnet, he fought valiantly and had won a marked success when, through his men being mistaken for the enemy, he was obliged to fly from the field. Escaping to France he bided his time, and then fitted out a little fleet of vessels and took possession of St. Michael's Mount off the coast of Cornwall. This he held for several months, only surrendering on condition that his life was spared. Sent as a prisoner to France, he escaped after three years' captivity, and then joined the forces of Henry in his struggle for the English throne. At the field of Bosworth he again proved his mettle as a fighter and general, contributing more than any other leader to the victory which gave the crown to Henry VII. And all through the reign of that king, as may be read in the Paston Letters, John, Earl of Oxford, was one of the staunchest supporters of the Lancastrian monarch. Many of the Paston Letters, it will be remembered, are dated by the Earl from "my castell of Hedyng-ham," which was still the favourite residence of the De Veres.

Edward de Vere, the seventeenth Earl, succeeded to the title when a lad of twelve, the result being that he became a royal ward and as such was committed to the charge of Elizabeth's famous minister, Sir William Cecil, afterwards Lord Burghley. As he spent the impressionable years of his youth in

Cecil's London house, it is hardly surprising that he grew up with a preference for town life, a fact which explains his indifference as to what became of his ancestors' country seat at Hedingham Castle. In his twenty-second year he married Cecil's daughter Anne, and thenceforward he took a prominent place at Elizabeth's court. His advance in the queen's favour was rapid. "My Lord of Oxford," wrote a correspondent of the time, "is lately grown into great credit; for the Queen's Majesty delighteth more in his personage, and his dancing, and valiantness, than any other. I think Sussex doth back him all that he can; if it were not for his fickle head, he would pass any of them shortly. My Lady Burghley unwisely has declared herself, as it were, jealous, which is come to the Queen's ear; whereat she has been not a little offended with her." Had it not been for his "fickle head" Oxford might have been numbered among the intimate favourites of Elizabeth; he had an attractive person, was accomplished in the arts of the tournament, dressed well, and could turn a sonnet with the best.

But his "fickle head," plus a headstrong spirit, was his undoing. His fondness for gorgeous dress and jewelry soon plunged him into debt, and soon after his marriage he sold Hedingham and his estates there to his father-in-law. Several years later he set out for a tour on the continent, leaving be-

hind him a long list of debts, the queen herself heading the list as a creditor for more than three thousand pounds. The other indebtednesses of this spendthrift courtier included large sums due to goldsmiths, jewellers, mercers, upholsters, embroiderers, haberdashers, armourers, drapers, tailors, and shoemakers. It is in keeping with all this love of finery that when he returned from the continent he brought with him a large assortment of perfumes, embroidered gloves, and other luxurious articles of dress, he being the first, as Stow asserted, to introduce scents and embroidered gloves into England. What with his debts and his enormous outlay on the adornment of his person, the Earl "sent his patrimony flying;" the support of his wife devolved upon her father, such sums as Oxford could raise by sale after sale of his possessions being devoted to his own use. Yet all the time he bore himself in a proud and presumptuous manner, scrupling not to use threatening language to the powerful Burghley. It was not until several years after his death that his successor sold a number of the family manors to re-purchase Hedingham Castle, but somewhere about the year 1625 that ancient home of the De Veres passed finally into other hands.

At the time the castle was in the possession of Lord Burghley it was in perfect repair and included many buildings which no longer exist. But the su-

perb keep, which is accounted one of the finest in all England, enables the modern pilgrim to form an adequate impression of the aspect the building bore when Matilda of Boulogne, the queen of Stephen, came hither on a spring visit in the year 1151. That much-tried woman and her usurping husband had good reason to count upon the friendship of the De Veres. Some twelve years earlier Aubrey de Vere had pleaded the cause of Stephen before an important council, and two years subsequently had lost his life in a London riot which had been occasioned by the unsettled condition of the country. His son, another Aubrey, the first of the earls of Oxford, was now lord of Hedingham Castle and the host of Queen Matilda. The occasion of her visit to the Essex stronghold is unknown; all that is on record is that a few days after her arrival she was taken ill of a fever, and, on the third of May, passed quietly away. Her body was taken to the abbey of Faversham for interment, where for many generations a Latin inscription, now preserved only in manuscript, told the story of her life: "In the year one thousand one hundred and fifty-one, not to her own, but to our great loss, the happy Matilda, the wife of King Stephen, died, ennobled by her virtues as by her titles. She was a true worshipper of God, and a real patroness of the poor. She lived submissive to God, that she might afterwards enjoy his presence. If ever woman deserved to be carried

by the hands of angels to heaven, it was this holy queen.”

But the chief royal association of Hedingham Castle is concerned with a hospitality which did not end in a funeral. It has been recorded above that Henry VII had no more faithful lord than John de Vere, the seventh Earl of Oxford, and the Paston Letters seem to show that that monarch visited Hedingham Castle on several occasions. But the visit which the lord of Hedingham had most cause to remember took place in the summer of 1498. Thanks to the elaborate preparations Oxford had made, the king appears to have thoroughly enjoyed the hospitality of the castle, nothing occurring to mar the pleasure of his weeks' stay.

When the time came, however, for the king's leave-taking the ceremony Oxford had arranged for that occasion led to an unexpected climax. There is no doubt that the scene took place in that noble audience chamber which yet occupies the chief floor of the castle, a splendid apartment measuring some forty feet in length by thirty feet in width with a handsome circular arch and many decorated niches. What happened here on that summer day of 1498 is told by Francis Bacon in his life of Henry VII, in which he pays due tribute to De Vere's "noble and sumptuous" entertainment. "At the king's going away," he adds, "the earl's servants stood, in a seemly manner, in their livery coats, with cog-

nisances, ranged on both sides, and made the king a lane. The king called the earl to him, and said, 'My lord, I have heard much of your hospitality, but I see it is greater than the speech: these handsome gentlemen and yeomen, which I see on both sides of me, are sure your menial servants.' The earl smiled, and said, 'It may please your Grace, that were not for mine own ease: they are most of them my retainers, that are come to do me service at such a time as this, and chiefly to see your Grace.' The king started a little, and said, 'By my faith, my lord, I thank you for your good cheer, but I may not endure to have my laws broken in my sight; my attorney must speak with you.' And it is part of the report, that the earl compounded for no less than fifteen thousand marks." In other words, the desire of the Earl of Oxford to show fit honour to his royal guest cost him no less a sum than ten thousand pounds!

But why that "villanous fine," as Horace Walpole called it? By some historians it has been cited as another proof of what Bacon calls the "nearness" of Henry VII, an adroit device to add to his own wealth. But Hume reminds us that during the reign of that king hardly a session passed without the framing of some statute against engaging retainers and giving them badges or liveries, the intention being to weaken the power of the great nobles. That being the case perhaps it was not

surprising that Henry proved so costly a guest to the lord of Hedingham, though it must be admitted that a fine of ten thousand pounds was a harsh return for Oxford's princely hospitality.

By the time Walpole visited Hedingham in the summer of 1748 the glory of the castle had grown dim. The place was now shrunk, he wrote, "to one vast curious tower, that stands on a high hill with a large fosse." And his guide pointed out in the distance the "miserable cottage" in which the last of the De Vere's had died in poverty. Thus the stately keep of Hedingham is a memorial not only of the proud race of De Vere but of that mutability against which vast wealth and ancient lineage are no defence.

II

MIDLAND ENGLAND

CHAPTER I

QUEEN MARY'S REFUGE

FRAMLINGHAM CASTLE

SOME thirty years ago visitors to the annual exhibition of the Royal Academy in London were arrested by a singularly pathetic picture entitled "The Last Days of Edward VI." The scene was laid in a room of the royal palace at Greenwich, at the open window of which the attendants of the youthful but dying king were uplifting his wasted form that the populace outside might see for themselves that their sovereign was still alive. But on Edward's face the artist had set the hue of approaching death, while his attitude betrayed the poignant indifference of utter weakness.

Through the chronicles of the time it is possible to supplement that melancholy picture. For some months through the winter of 1552-3 the lad had been ailing; in April he was removed to Greenwich; early in June the lords in immediate attendance upon his person realized that the end was not far distant. That fact was of supreme importance to one of their number, namely, John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland. He was playing for high stakes. If the young Edward were to die and be

succeeded by his sister Mary, the child of Henry VIII and Catherine of Arragon, not only would he be probably compelled to restore the property he had pillaged from the religious houses, but, unless he recanted his Protestant faith for Catholicism, his very life would be in danger.

Foreseeing all this, Northumberland bethought him how he could prevent such disaster. The first step in his scheme was to marry his son Guildford to the Lady Jane Grey, one of Edward's cousins; the second was to persuade the dying king to draw up such a will as would exclude his sisters Mary and Elizabeth from the succession and bestow his crown upon the Lady Jane Grey and the heirs of her body. This was a heavy task, but Northumberland was equal to its execution. And so it came to pass that by the middle of June, 1553, everything was in order for the carrying out of Northumberland's conspiracy, — an ambitious conspiracy which would elevate his son and daughter-in-law to the throne of England. Nothing remained save to await the death of the king.

And late in the evening of July 6th the suffering youth passed peacefully away. Although long expected, that event happened before Northumberland was quite ready; perhaps it would be more correct to say that when the event came he realized that something was lacking to ensure the success of his plot. His omission was brought home to him early

the following morning. Northumberland was still in bed when one of his supporters asked the duke's son whether arrangements had been taken to arrest the person of the Princess Mary. None had. "What," he exclaimed, "will you let the Lady Mary escape, and not secure her person?" It seemed incredible that such an important matter had been overlooked; and that day, while yet the news of Edward's death was prevented from being publicly known, an effort was made to rectify the blunder. The device took the form of a letter to Mary; her brother, it said, was exceedingly weak, and had expressed a desire to see her. The letter was duly delivered to Mary at her house at Hunsdon, and she actually set out to answer it in person. Had she completed that journey she would never have been queen of England; once in the power of Northumberland he would have taken good care to provide for her secure keeping.

But a warning reached her ere it was too late. Who sent that warning is one of the problems of history. By some the friendly service is credited to the Earl of Arundel; others have accepted the assertion of Sir Nicholas Throckmorton that he was the means of preventing Mary from falling into Northumberland's trap. Throckmorton's autobiography was told in verse by some unknown writer, and the stanzas relating to this episode of English history present such an admirable summary of

events that they deserve quotation. It should be remembered that the story is supposed to be narrated by Throckmorton himself.

“ Mourning, from Greenwich I did straight depart
To London, to an house which bore our name.
My brethren guessed by my heavy heart
The King was dead, and I confess'd the same:
The hushing of his death I did unfold,
Their meaning to proclaim queen Jane I told.

“ And, though I lik'd not the religion
Which all her life queen Mary had professed,
Yet in my mind that wicked motion
Right heirs for to displace I did detest.
Causeless to profer any injury,
I meant it not, but sought for remedy.

“ Wherefore from four of us the news was sent,
How that her brother he was dead and gone;
In post her goldsmith then from London went,
By whom the message was dispatched anon.
She asked, ‘ If we knew it certainly? ’
Who answered, ‘ Sir Nicholas knew it verily.’ ”

Whether that is the true version, or whether the Earl of Arundel contrived to send a messenger to Mary, the important fact for her was that she learnt ere too late that the letter from Edward was a hoax, and that it behoved her, for the moment, to seek safety in flight. She acted with great promptitude, resolving there and then to retire to her Norfolk house at Kenninghall. But as the journey was too long for one day, the fugitive queen halted for the night at Sawston Hall, a mansion not far

from Cambridge belonging to the Catholic family of Huddleston. News of her presence there, however, quickly became known in Cambridge, and the following morning there set out from that town a band of resolute Protestants who were determined to take her prisoner. They failed in their enterprise; once more a timely warning reached Mary, enabling her to don a disguise and so escape. Her immediate danger was over, for late that day she reached Kenninghall in safety.

Although her followers were few and despite the fact that she had no knowledge of the extent to which she could count upon the support of the chief lords and the nation, Mary lost no time in asserting her rights to the vacant throne. Hence the letter which she dispatched to the council from Kenninghall on the ninth of July, a letter in which she charged her lords to cause her right and title to the crown to be proclaimed in London and elsewhere without delay. What step to take next caused her some perplexity; if her foes should come to attack her, she had no army to meet them in battle, neither was Kenninghall strong enough to withstand a siege. But some twenty miles distant was the castle of Framlingham, which had been placed at her disposal by her late brother; that was a sturdy fortress encircled with three lines of defence, and, besides, it was only a few miles from the North Sea, over which, if the worst came, she

could escape to seek help elsewhere. On all accounts, then, Framlingham Castle would offer her the securest refuge, and thither Mary journeyed on the tenth or eleventh of July.

Now it so fortuned that the custodian of Framlingham was a man of the Catholic faith, and that while its defences were in good order its inward plenishing made it fit for the residence of a queen. What would make the building still more acceptable to Mary was that it contained a little chapel consecrated to the Catholic ritual, with a cloth of arras depicting the passion of Christ, and that a priest of her own belief still tended the altar there. Her reception was as hearty as she could desire; the governor gladly surrendered the building to one whom he naturally regarded as his rightful queen; and that night the royal standard was unfurled from the castle battlements in token of Mary's claim to the crown.

Leaving her in the security of Framlingham Castle, it is necessary, for the moment, to give some account of the course of events in London. Mary's letter of the ninth of July had been delivered to the Duke of Northumberland and duly read in council, but it availed not to turn him from his purpose. On his motion a reply was drafted, to which twenty-one of the councillors signed their names. That letter informed the fugitive princess that, in accordance with the will of her late brother, the Lady



FRAMLINGHAM CASTLE.

Jane Grey had already been proclaimed queen of England, reminded her that she had been declared illegitimate, and advised her to submit herself to the mercy of Queen Jane.

In its announcement of the proclamation of the new queen that letter to Mary told the truth. On the afternoon of the tenth of July the Lady Jane had been conveyed to the Tower of London, to be there formally informed of her accession to the crown. She was no more than a pawn in Northumberland's high game; it was not by her will or desire that she entered into competition with the daughter of Henry VIII; whatever fault may be urged against England's nine days' queen personal ambition cannot be laid to her charge. Once the hollow ceremony in the Tower was completed, Northumberland thought it time to make a public announcement of Edward's death and the name of his successor. About seven o'clock that evening, then, three heralds and a trumpeter, with the king's sheriff in attendance, proceeded to the cross in the Cheap and there proclaimed to the citizens of London that Edward VI was dead and that the Lady Jane was queen of England; but though a large crowd gathered for the ceremony it was noted that "few or none said 'God save her.' " Nay, there were some who had the courage to question those doings. For in the crowd stood a young man named Gilbert Potter, a humble tavern servant, who was

heard to ejaculate that "the Lady Mary has the better title." For reward he was promptly seized, hurried to the pillory and nailed thereto by both his ears.

Nor was the exclamation of that tavern servant the only ominous sign of the times. When Northumberland and his supporters met in council two days later they were perturbed to learn that their high-handed proceedings had not won the approval of the nation. On the contrary, it was reported that numerous influential lords and knights were hurrying to Mary at Framlingham and that several towns had proclaimed her queen. "Whereupon by speedy council it was there concluded that the Duke of Suffolk, with certain other noblemen, should go towards the Lady Mary, to fetch her up to London." That suggestion, however, did not meet with unanimous approval; Queen Jane implored that her father, the Duke of Suffolk, might tarry by her side; whereupon the council invited the Duke of Northumberland to assume the task of leading the expedition to Framlingham. He was, they said, the best man of war in the realm; none was so fit as he to take that enterprise in hand. This flattery effected its purpose; "Well," said the duke, "since ye think it good, I and mine will go, not doubting of your fidelity to the queen's majesty, whom I leave in your custody."

So preparations for the enterprise were at once

put in hand. Northumberland gave orders for the assembling of all his own retainers, carts were loaded with the munitions of war, field pieces were requisitioned, and six ships were equipped to sail towards the east coast lest Mary should try to escape over the sea. Some six thousand men were gathered together, but as the little army marched out of London its general observed to one who rode by his side, "The people press to see us, but not one saith 'God speed you.'"

Meanwhile certain documents headed "Jane the Queen" and endorsed with the great seal were issued, in each of which the ill-fated instrument of Northumberland's ambition was made to appeal to her "rightly trusty and right well-beloved" cousins. In one she asked assistance against the "feigned and untrue claim of the Lady Mary, bastard daughter to our great uncle Henry the Eighth of famous memory;" in another she exhorted her subjects to remain fast in their obedience and duty to the crown notwithstanding the "slandrous reports or letters" which had been circulated by the Lady Mary and her adherents.

But how had that Lady Mary fared in her refuge at Framlingham Castle? Excellently well. Each day some new supporter arrived at the castle, lords and knights who offered her not only the service of their swords and lives but also the devotion of their numerous followers. Taking courage from

such accessions of strength, Mary began to assume the aggressive. Not only did she issue commands to the lords, lieutenants and sheriffs of the counties to come to her aid, and bid the towns proclaim her accession to the throne, but on learning that Northumberland was on his way to Framlingham with an army she offered a reward of a thousand pounds to any who would capture that duke and lead him to her presence.

Most of those royal orders were immediately obeyed. In town after town the officials made due proclamation that the daughter of Henry VIII had succeeded to the throne as Queen Mary, while the influx of armed men was so great that in a little while the castle of Framlingham was surrounded by an army of some thirty thousand volunteers. Nor were supplies lacking for that unexpected host. While the little parish of Worlingworth some seven miles distant contributed malt and ale and butter and cheese, the distant town of Colchester added three tuns of beer to the stores. Day by day, indeed, signs multiplied that the nation was wroth with Northumberland; he had laid his plans so clumsily that he had been found out on the threshold of his conspiracy; besides which a sense of fair play prompted the conclusion that the rightful successor of Edward VI was none other than the elder of his two sisters. Whatever fears the Protestants might have had as to the danger to their faith that

might ensue from a Catholic queen, they were allayed by Mary's assurance that she would not change the laws of the land.

From the time she reached Framlingham Castle there was no check to Mary's good fortune. Perhaps there was one anxious hour when it was learnt that a fleet of six vessels was sailing along the adjacent coast, but even that event was soon transformed into a cause for rejoicing. Those ships, which had been sent to prevent Mary's flight over the North Sea, were driven into Yarmouth by stress of weather, and it so happened that at that time Sir Henry Jerningham, one of Mary's most zealous supporters, was recruiting in the neighbourhood. Hastening to Yarmouth he and several of his companions took a boat and rowed out to the vessels. Hailed in a friendly manner by the sailors, they were asked what they wanted and whether they desired the captains of the fleet. "Yea, marry," answered Jerningham; to which the sailors made reply, "Ye shall have them, or else we will throw them to the bottom of the sea." But the captains seem to have been as willing as their men to declare for Queen Mary; at any rate, even if they made a virtue of necessity, they at once joined Jerningham's forces and marched with him to Framlingham.

Nor was that the only misfortune which befell the Duke of Northumberland. The promises that

he should be sent reinforcements on his march had not been kept; the soldiers who were with him began to grow lukewarm and finally refused to proceed any farther; and when he turned back and had reached Cambridge he was startled to learn that the Lady Mary had been proclaimed queen in London on the nineteenth of July! That was no idle tale; in the absence of Northumberland the lords of the council had deserted his cause, and the nine days' reign of the Lady Jane was at an end. Nor did it avail the defeated noble that he turned traitor to his daughter-in-law by himself proclaiming Mary at Cambridge; the next day the Earl of Arundel reached that town and arrested Northumberland in Mary's name.

Notwithstanding all these strokes of good fortune, Mary was in no hurry to leave her refuge. The break-up of Northumberland's conspiracy and the fact of her proclamation in London must have been known by her on the twentieth of July, yet she tarried at Framlingham for another ten days. That delay may have been dictated by caution; or, on the other hand, it may have been due to her enjoyment of her surroundings. Certainly the latter were wholly desirable; charmingly situated in a picturesque countryside, a "very fair and beautiful" building, the castle of Framlingham was worthy of its regal guest.

For the new queen of England was not the first

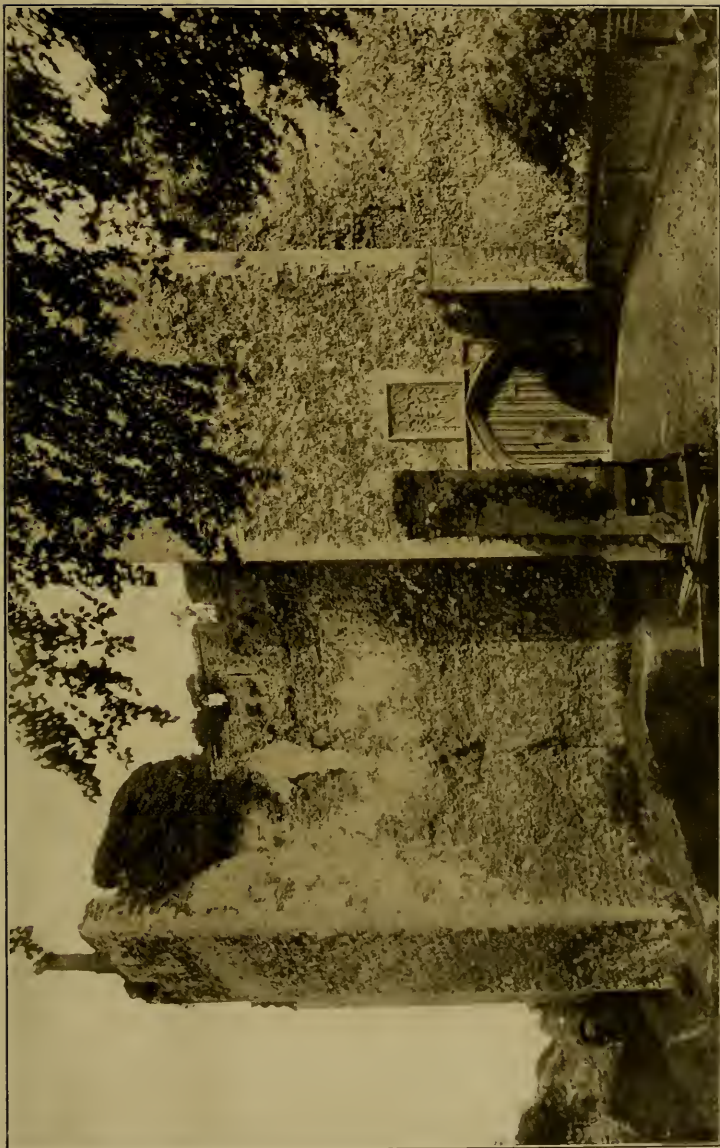
royal visitor to that Suffolk stronghold. A part of its history may be read in the lines of a local poet:

“Heir of antiquity! — fair castled town,
Rare spot of beauty, grandeur, and renown,
Seat of East Anglian Kings! — proud child of fame,
Hallowed by time, illustrious Framlinghame!
I touch my lyre, delighted thus to bring
To thee my heart's full homage while I sing.
And thou, old Castle — thy bold turrets high,
Have shed their deep enchantment to mine eye,
Though years have chang'd thee, I have gazed intent
In silent joy on tower and battlement.
Where all thy time-worn glories met my sight,
Then have I felt such rapture, such delight,
That, had the splendour of thy days of yore
Flash'd on my view I had not loved thee more.
Scene of immortal deeds, thy walls have rung
To pealing shouts from many a warrior's tongue,
When first thy founder, Redwald of the spear,
Manned thy high tower, defied his foemen near,
When, girt with strength, East Anglia's King of old,
The sainted Edmund, sought thy sheltering hold.
When the proud Dane, fierce Hinguar, in his ire,
Besieged the King, and wrapped thy walls in fire,
While Edmund fled, but left thee with his name
Linked, and for ever, to the chain of fame.
Thou wast then great! and long, in other years
Thy grandeur shone — thy portraiture appears,
From history's pencil like a summer night,
With much of shadow, but with more of light.”

Although some parts of the present ruins may preserve portions of an older building, the bulk of the crumbling masonry belongs most probably to the closing generation of the twelfth century, for the castle seems to have been entirely rebuilt about

the year 1170. This, of course, was long anterior to that half-legendary time when Framlingham afforded a temporary haven for that king of East Anglia who by his martyrdom and burial gave his name to the ancient town of St. Edmund's Bury. It was more than a century later, too, than the gift of the manor by William the Conqueror to that Roger Bigod who had given the Norman duke such valuable aid at the battle of Hastings. Framlingham remained in the possession of his descendants for many years, afterwards becoming successively the property of a brother of a king of England, the Segraves, the Mowbrays, and the Howards.

For more than two and a half centuries, then, this noble castle was one of the chief seats of the successive dukes of Norfolk, a fact which has enriched its annals with countless associations with some of the most distinguished figures in English history. Glimpses of life in the old castle during the fifteenth century shine out here and there in the quaint pages of the Paston Letters, many of which were dated from Framlingham. We see the great state, almost regal, kept by the noble owner, and learn how he, as though a monarch, had his council for the debate of his affairs; now there is a little picture of a birth in the family, anon the scene changes to a death-bed; through other pages there resounds the clash of arms of the War of the Roses. Duke succeeded to duke, the line changed from Mowbray to How-



THE ENTRANCE GATEWAY, FRAMLINGHAM CASTLE.

ard, now the head of the house is in high honour with his king and now in deep disgrace, but amid all mutations Framlingham Castle remained a steady landmark in the family history. One of its latest masters was Thomas Howard, third duke of his line, who had the good fortune to be saved from the scaffold by the death of Henry VIII, for that monarch passed away on the very day which had been fixed for Norfolk's execution. He was, however, detained in prison during the whole of Edward VI's reign, only securing his freedom when Mary ascended the throne. And now he sleeps at Framlingham, in the church which lies under the shadow of that castle which had been so sure a refuge for his deliverer.

CHAPTER II

THE “ SHE WOLF’S ” CAGE

CASTLE RISING

SURELY no royal bride ever began her wedded life under more promising conditions than Isabella the Fair, the queen-consort of Edward II. The daughter of Philip le Bel of France and Joan of Navarre, endowed with such loveliness that Froissart described her as “ one of the fairest ladies of the world,” she was but sixteen years old when she became the wife of the English king, a bridegroom of twenty-four summers and tall and handsome and of great bodily strength. So eager had her lover been to claim her as his bride that he neglected many of his late father’s injunctions to hurry to his espousals. Edward had been so fired by the reports of her rare beauty that the vows he took by his father’s death-bed were as dust in the balance.

It was in the cathedral of Boulogne the wedding took place on a late January day of 1308, the ceremony, which was of unusual magnificence, being attended by four kings and three queens and a huge concourse of French and English nobles. Not until thirteen days later did the wedded pair set out for

England, the interval being spent in continuous feasting and revelry. Philip le Bel had been no niggard in equipping his daughter for her queenly state; she carried with her to her new home two richly-ornamented gold crowns, gold and silver plate in abundance, dresses of velvet and silver and gold warp and woof, rare furs, and costly tapestries for her chamber, and countless yards of linen.

Ere departing to fetch his bride the young king had given orders for her worthy reception in his own capital. At the palace of Westminster the royal apartments were rebuilt and refurnished; the king's ship was newly painted and fitted with handsome cabins for Isabella's voyage; and elaborate preparations were in hand for the coronation of the happy couple.

But destiny had ordained a swift over-clouding for this smiling picture. Edward II was in the toils of his infatuation for his favourite Piers de Gaveston; perhaps he had forgotten that worthless Gascon in the excitements of his bridal tour, but no sooner had he landed at Dover than his unnatural passion for that "lascivious minion" revived in all its force. Ignoring all the others of his court who had come to greet him, he sprang towards his favourite, hailed him as "brother," and clasped him in his arms. And ere many days had fled the bridal presents of Isabella the Fair were transferred to Gaveston's rapacious hands. The reader

of history may marvel at that untoward fate which substituted "the She Wolf of France" for so engaging a nickname as "Isabella the Fair," but when he remembers how quickly Edward sacrificed his fealty as a husband to his passion for his favourite the mystery is explained. The poet Drayton, in the "heroical epistle" which he placed in Isabella's mouth, justifies as few historians do the transformation of her love into loathing.

"Did Bulloin once a festival prepare
For England, Almain, Sicil, and Navarre?
When France envy'd those buildings (only blest)
Grac'd with the orgies of my bridal feast,
That English Edward should refuse my bed,
For that lascivious, shameless Ganymede?
And in my place, upon his regal throne,
To set that girl-boy, wanton Gaveston?
Betwixt the feature of my face and his,
My glass assures me no such difference is,
That a foul witch's bastard should thereby
Be thought more worthy of his love than I."

In an earlier chapter brief reference has already been made to the fact that Edward did not learn wisdom from the tragedy which overtook Gaveston and to his incredible folly in filling his place with another worthless favourite in the person of Hugh Despenser the younger. The old programme was repeated; no gifts were too large or costly for the favourite and his father; Edward neglected his queen for the company of his beloved Hugh; and once more she was made to realize how secondary

were her interests compared with those of the man whom her frivolous husband delighted to honour. These things are explanation enough of the transmuting of love into hatred, of that change in character represented by the coarse epithet of "the She Wolf of France."

Not until it was too late did Edward realize the extent of his own shortcomings and the catastrophe he was preparing. A deep drinker, vulgar in his tastes and fond of low companions, his absorption in his own mean pleasures was so complete that he doubtless regarded himself as a model husband and was not conscious of the waning of his wife's love. He was living in that fool's paradise so late as the Christmas-tide of 1321, for to that season belongs the mandate he issued to the royal treasurer to provide "sixteen pieces of cloth for the apparelling of ourselves and our dear companion, also furs, against the next feast of Christmas, and thirteen pieces of cloth for corsets for our said companion and her damsels." But that is the last Christmas present from Edward to Isabella of which there is any record.

In due course the Despensers so firmly consolidated their influence over the king that he followed their advice blindly. And when they, fearing Isabella was in league with their enemies, deemed it advisable to weaken her power, and counselled Edward to deprive her of her estates and put her upon

a beggarly allowance of a pound a day, their suggestion was immediately accepted.

So utterly had Isabella's husband failed her. The man who should have given her love, whose duty it was to protect her, who should have stood by her side if all others in the world had fallen away, had come to this miserable pass that he treated his wedded wife, the daughter of a king, as a hired menial of his household. What was the inevitable result? Why, that some other man filled the vacant place in Isabella's heart. And a romantic story is sometimes told of how she became acquainted with that other man. As thus: At the time Isabella took up her residence in the Tower of London in anticipation of the birth of her last child, there was confined in that fortress — so the story goes — a masterful noble named Roger Mortimer, who had been imprisoned for taking arms against his king. “The manner in which he contrived, while under sentence of death in one of the prison lodgings of the Tower of London, to create so powerful an interest in the heart of the beautiful consort of his offended sovereign, is not related by any of the chroniclers of that reign.” Such is the version of that somewhat hysterical biographer of the queens of England, Agnes Strickland. The lady's surprise at the omission of the chroniclers admits an easy explanation; Mortimer was not confined to the Tower until more than six months after Isabella's accouchment there.

In fact there is no evidence to show that intimate relations were established between Isabella and Mortimer until they were both exiles from England. On the other hand, the exciting story of how Mortimer suborned the constable of the Tower, gave a feast to his gaolers, drugged their wine, and escaped while they slept, seems true in every particular.

Biding her time with great patience, Isabella was at length rewarded with an opportunity to return to her native land. Owing to the accession of her brother Charles to the throne of France, it became necessary for Edward to perform homage to that king for Aquitaine, but Isabella persuaded her husband to send her instead. So, in March, 1325, she crossed to France. If her brother would have accepted her substitutionary homage, she had no idea of performing that ceremony. Her plans had been matured; she would not return to England until she was able to revenge herself upon the Despensers and her husband alike. And fortune favoured her scheme. For when Charles insisted that Edward must perform his homage in person, or alternately should send his eldest son Edward as a substitute, the English king at once fell into the trap and agreed that the heir to his throne should join his mother in Paris.

From the day of the young Edward's arrival, Isabella was master of the situation. And when month succeeded month without the return of his wife or

son that hard truth dawned upon the English king himself. It is to this period belong those letters of Edward which present us with the unusual spectacle of a king deserted by his wife. Addressing himself to his "very dear and beloved brother" the King of France, Edward expressed his astonishment that he had credited those who had informed him that his wife dared not return to her husband because of the peril she apprehended from Hugh Despenser. "Certes, dearest brother," he added, "it cannot be that she can have fear of him, or any other man in our realm; since, *par Dieu!* if either Hugh or any other living being in our dominions would wish to do her ill, and it came to our knowledge, we would chastise him in a manner that should be an example to all others." Wherefore the King of England implored his "dearest brother," for the honour of them both, that he would "compel" Isabella to return to her lord with all speed. To Isabella, whom he addressed as "Lady," Edward wrote in much the same strain, charging her to cease from all "pretences, delays, and false excuses" and hasten home with all speed. There was a note, too, for the young Edward; if his mother would not return, he was to come home alone, for his father had a great desire to see and speak with him. All these letters were written in the last month of 1325.

Three months later King Edward was still sus-

taining the rôle of the deserted husband. And now he had a genuine grievance. For the ambitious Mortimer, making common cause against their mutual enemy, had by the spring of 1326 cast in his lot with that of Isabella. Nay, out of their hatred for the King of England had grown a more tender passion; in short, Mortimer had taken Edward's place in the affections of his queen. News of this was not long in crossing the Channel; that the English monarch was acquainted with his wife's unfaithfulness when he wrote to his son in the month of March is obvious from his protest that his wife had " attached to herself, and retains in her company, the Mortimer, our traitor and mortal foe." The liaison, in fact, was common knowledge in England; wherever Isabella went, Mortimer was her constant companion.

Once more the dishonoured Edward appealed to his " dearest brother " of France; his wife did not love him as she " ought to love her lord; " he prayed him earnestly to attend to his " supreme desire." To his son, too, the miserable king made yet another appeal; let him at least cease from all excuses and hasten home.

Not until another six months had fled did either Isabella or the young Edward return. And then their home-coming was in such wise that it had been better for Edward II they had stayed away. For when Isabella sailed for England in September,

1326, she was accompanied not only by her son, and Mortimer, and other powerful nobles, but also by an army of foreign mercenaries. Hardly, too, had she landed than other lords with their followers hastened to her standard. And in less than a couple of months the two Despensers were captured and beheaded and Edward himself a prisoner in his wife's hands. Her proclamation that she had come to free the nation from the tyranny of the Despensers and restore justice in the land rallied all to her side.

For nigh three years Isabella and Mortimer were supreme in England. Edward II was deposed and murdered; his son, although proclaimed king as Edward III, was but a cipher in the hands of his mother and her paramour. But at the end of three years there came a day of reckoning. Having reached his eighteenth year and taken to himself a wife, Edward III thought it time to assume the government of the land. In this he had the encouragement of Lord Montacute, who suggested how he might throw off his bondage.

A parliament was summoned at Nottingham, to which Isabella and Mortimer, now living openly together, went, making their abode in the castle of that town. The governor was taken into the young king's confidence; he disclosed a secret entrance to the building unknown to Mortimer; and at midnight the king and his followers were duly admitted

by that unsuspected passage. Making their way swiftly to Mortimer's apartment, there was a brief scuffle, a piteous plea from Isabella — "Sweet son, fair son, spare my gentle Mortimer!" — but in a few minutes the queen's lover was a prisoner.

For Mortimer there was short shrift. A month later he was tried, condemned, hung at Tyburn, and drawn and quartered. The catalogue of his offences was so framed to hide Isabella's dishonour. Through the mediation of the Pope the partner of the executed noble was spared the indignity of a trial or the disclosure of her illicit love. But what was to be done with her?

\ It is at this point of her career that the "She Wolf of France" becomes, in so many histories, the subject of harrowing legend. Froissart appears to have been the first to circulate idle tales of Isabella's deplorable fate. Edward, he wrote, commanded that the queen his mother "should be kept close in a castle, and so it was done; and she had with her ladies and damosels, knights and squires, to serve her according to her estate, and certain ladies assigned to her to maintain therewith her noble estate all the days of her life; but in no wise she should not depart out of the castle, without it were to see such sports as was sometime showed before the castle gate for her recreation." A kindred picture of sombre hue is painted by Sir Richard Baker in that "Chronicle of the Kings of

England " so beloved by Sir Roger de Coverley and other old-fashioned squires. Isabella, he said, had all her jointure taken from her, and was put on a pension of a thousand pounds a year, " and herself confined to a castle, where she remained the rest of her days, no fewer than thirty years. A time long enough to find that her being the Daughter of a King, the Sister of a King, the Wife of a King, and the Mother of a King, were glorious Titles, but all not worth the liberty of a mean Estate." More recent historians have written in a similar strain: Lingard asserts that Edward confined his mother " to the manor of Risings, where she passed in obscurity the remaining twenty-seven years of her life; " and Miss Strickland affirms that at least during the first two years of her confinement Isabella's seclusion was " most rigorous." We are assured, indeed, that while Mortimer's body hung on the gallows she had a " violent access of madness," that her " agonies " were severe, etc., etc.

Now, the only grain of truth in all this is that Castle Rising, a historic stronghold near the ancient town of King's Lynn and not far from the Norfolk seacoast, was the chief home of the queen dowager. But, as a matter of fact, she did not become a resident here until the end of 1331, more than a year after Mortimer's execution, and then it was as the owner of the castle, the life-interest of which she purchased from the widow of its previous owner.



CASTLE RISING.

The records of the fourteenth century show that Isabella paid numerous visits to different parts of England; that she visited and was visited by her son the king; and that although she was prevented from interfering in the government of the country she was allowed a large amount of liberty to order her life as she pleased. When Mortimer was torn from her side she had nearly twenty-eight years of life in reserve, and of that period the bulk was spent in her Norfolk home.

Castle Rising, then, became the cage of the "She Wolf of France," but she lived there in a state hardly less regal than that she had enjoyed as queen of England. Her means were ample, her retinue large, and the corporation of the neighbouring town of King's Lynn was not unmindful of its loyal duty to the widow of the late king and the mother of the reigning sovereign. It is true there were occasions when the townfolk of Lynn came into collision with the queen's servants at Rising, but in the main, from the year when she took up her abode at the castle to the year of her death more than a quarter of a century later, the relations between the town and the ex-queen were exceedingly friendly. This is cogently illustrated by the Lynn records, which show how "Isabell the old Queen" was the recipient of many presents from the corporation. The list includes bread, and oats, casks of wine, swans, flesh-meats, barrels of sturgeon, herrings, and now

and then some undefined "tribute." There were offerings, too, for Isabella's servants, such as falcons for her steward and "two tartelettes" for a more menial retainer. It is sometimes stated that Edward III visited his mother at Castle Rising soon after she established her household there, but the Lynn records date his "first coming to Rysyng" some thirteen years later than that event.

Of the castle, once a large and imposing pile consisting of towers and chapels and halls and galleries and out-buildings, little remains save the massive Norman keep erected towards the end of the twelfth century. In that keep it is still possible to trace the chief outlines of the great hall in which Isabella held her court and received her famous son, an apartment which even in decay is a potent aid to the imagination in re-picturing the glories of feudal magnificence. And the interest of a visit to this now desolate ruin is heightened by remembering that the lords of Castle Rising have included Odo of Bayeux, and that William d'Albini, who married the widow of Henry I.

A fourteenth-century heir of d'Albini, one Robert de Monthaut, was not so fortunate as Isabella in his relations with his neighbours of King's Lynn. As the owner of Castle Rising the tolls of Lynn were a part of his income, but the townfolk became so enraged against paying him tribute that in 1313, on a day when Robert de Monthaut and his servants



THE TOWER STAIRS, CASTLE RISING.

were in Lynn to collect taxes, they rose in rebellion, chased De Monthaut to his house, besieged him there, battered down his doors, took him and his men prisoners, and finally made their over-lord promise that he would not collect any more dues for twenty years. For sequel De Monthaut brought an action against the corporation, in which he was awarded four thousand pounds damages. From that date the records of Lynn show how year after year the corporation struggled with the debt that had been incurred by the fatal policy of trying to over-ride the law. Although the town was heavily taxed to raise the instalments due to the lord of Castle Rising the sums realized were often so small that many years elapsed ere the full damages were paid. In fact, the good burghers of Lynn had ample time in which ruefully to reflect that they were less fortunate in engineering a rebellion than the "She Wolf of France."

CHAPTER III

THE CASTLE OF "PRINCELY PLEASURES"

KENILWORTH CASTLE

THANKS to the magic of Sir Walter Scott's pen, there is no castle in all England which has a more world-wide fame than that of Kenilworth. Yet it was not the author's wish that the novel of "Kenilworth" should take its title from the name of the castle. As he derived the inspiration of his story from Mickle's pathetic ballad of "Cumnor Hall," he was inclined to christen his romance by the same name, but one of his publishers urged him to change the title to "Kenilworth," and the substitution was agreed to by Scott despite the warning of another adviser to the effect that the result would prove "something worthy of the kennel." That kind prophecy did not come true; among all the Waverley novels not one has been or is so much a favourite as "Kenilworth;" and to this day that romance is the chief cause why the picturesque ruins of Lord Leicester's Warwickshire castle are sought out by so many thousands of pilgrims.

Seeing how great is our debt to Scott for the glowing picture he has given us of the most notable event in the history of Kenilworth Castle it may



KENILWORTH CASTLE.



seem ungracious to recall the fact that in penning his romance of Leicester and Amy Robsart and Queen Elizabeth he, as usual, set small store by history or chronology. The result is disastrous in the case of those visitors who accept Scott's romance for history; they pester the caretaker to point out those parts of the castle associated with the tragedy of Amy Robsart and even bring to the building a greater store of legend than Scott himself created. There is, however, so much of interest attaching to this imposing ruin that it will do no harm to winnow fact from fancy.

What has to be remembered, then, is that at the date of Queen Elizabeth's famous visit to Kenilworth Amy Robsart had been in her grave nearly fifteen years, and that her strange death did not take place here but at Cumnor Hall. It is a mistake, too, to speak of her as the Countess Leicester, for her husband, Robert Dudley, was not created Earl of Leicester until four years after his wife's death. And, finally, the castle and manor of Kenilworth were not presented to Dudley until 1563, three years subsequent to Amy Robsart's suicide or murder. Such are the stubborn facts which Scott ignored for the sake of dramatic effect.

But the subtraction of imagination from truth does little to impoverish the annals of Kenilworth. The apostrophe of the poet may be adopted without reserve:

“ Illustrious ruin! hoary Kenilworth!
Thou hast outlived the customs of thy day;
And, in the imbecility of age,
Art now the spectacle of modern times.
Yet though thy halls are silent, though thy bowers
Re-echo back the traveller’s lonely tread,
Again imagination bids thee rise
In all thy dread magnificence and strength;
Thy draw-bridge, foss, and frowning battlements
Portcullis, barbican, and donjon-tower.”

Many pens have laboured to describe the varied beauties and singular fascinations of this famous ruin, but for quaint and picturesque phrase nothing can compare with the exordium of that lively letter in which Robert Laneham narrated for the benefit of a friend in London the rare doings of the summer of 1575. He told how the air round the castle was “ sweet and wholesome,” how it was set “ as it were in the navel of England,” how the landscape was diversified by dale and hill and “ sweet springs bursting forth,” and how it was “ so plentifully well sorted on every side into arable, meadow, pasture, wood, water, as it appears to have need of nothing that may pertain to living or pleasure.” The immediate grounds of the castle included “ a fair park ” full of “ red deer and other stately game for hunting; ” there was a “ goodly pool of rare breadth, length, depth, and store of all kinds of fresh water fish, delicate, great, and fat, and also of wild fowl besides; ” while the whole was “ beautified with many delectable, fresh, and umbrageous bow-

ers, harbours, seats, and walks, that with great art, cost, and diligence were very pleasantly appointed." In fact, such was the natural grace of the tall and fresh fragrant trees that Diana herself "might have deigned there well enough to range for her pastime." Briefer but kindred in spirit was Camden's eulogy of this "most noble, beautiful, and strong castle," which, he added, might justly claim a second place among the stateliest castles of the land.

Long before the days of the Virgin Queen the castle of Kenilworth had gathered to itself a generous harvest of royal associations. An annalist of Warwickshire has told how in 1266 Kenilworth was besieged by Henry III, how in 1279 it was the scene of a gallant and costly tournament in which a hundred knights took part, how in 1414 Henry V kept his Lent here, and how in 1436 Henry VI made his Christmas feast within these walls. It was here, too, that Edward II began that imprisonment which ended only with his death.

Though the records of the tournament of 1279 are meagre compared with those of Leicester's entertainment of 1575, they are sufficient to indicate what great expense and care were bestowed upon the display. The moving spirit was Roger Mortimer, Baron of Wigmore, who had bravely served his king on many a stricken field but who now, in his fiftieth year, thought it time to bid farewell to all martial

exploits. As noted above, his guests included a hundred knights and as many ladies, whom he entertained sumptuously for three days with tilting and banquetting and music and the dance. An old chronicle gives us a momentary glimpse of that baronial fête, noting specially the "rich silken mantles" of the ladies and how their knights jousted with each other in chivalrous rivalry.

According to the testimony of Stow, Henry V's Lenten exercises at Kenilworth in 1414 were not wholly of a religious nature. He caused, says Stow, a "harbour to be planted in the marsh for his pleasure, among the thorns and bushes, where a fox had harboured, which fox he killed, being a thing thought to prognosticate that he should expel the crafty deceit of the French king; besides which he also there builded a most pleasant place, and caused it to be named 'le Plaisant Marais,' or 'The Pleasant Marsh.'" Another tradition affirms that it was while Henry was at Kenilworth he received from the French Dauphin that insulting present of a barrel of tennis-balls with a message that they were the most fit playthings for him and his young men. Henry replied that he would soon send the French balls which should make their cities and strong towers tremble, a promise which the warrior king amply redeemed at the battle of Agincourt.

But to the reader of "Kenilworth" all these incidents have a far slighter interest than the story



THE LEICESTER BUILDINGS, KENILWORTH CASTLE.

of those seventeen days in the July of 1575 when the Earl of Leicester entertained Queen Elizabeth with such prodigious splendour. It is sometimes forgotten, however, that that was not the Virgin Queen's first visit to Kenilworth. Twice before had she been the guest of her favourite, once in the August of 1565 and again in the same month of 1572. As the first of those visits took place only two years after the queen had presented the castle to the earl he had had but little time in which to prepare for his distinguished visitor, but even in 1572, when he had no doubt completed many of his new buildings, his hospitality seems to have been planned on a modest scale. Perhaps he had ampler notice of the visit of 1575, and so had opportunity to make thorough preparations.

Certainly his preparations were unprecedented for their variety, ingenuity, and magnificence. If it were possible to credit the Earl of Leicester with having devised the entertainment himself, then he would deserve more fame as an organizer of spectacles than as a queen's favourite. No doubt he made some suggestions, but the entire scheme of the " Princely Pleasures " of Kenilworth suggests that it was the result of the anxious thought of many brains. It amazed the vivacious Laneham. He had travelled, he said, in many lands, but for persons, place, time, cost, devices, and abundance he had seen nothing so memorable anywhere.

Elizabeth was met by her host at Long Ichington, a little town some seven miles from Kenilworth, entertaining her to dinner there in a tent of such "large and goodly room" that the posts alone filled no fewer than seven carts. To amuse the queen after her repast two prodigies were produced, one being a fat boy who had the bulk and height of a young man of eighteen years although he had not completed his fifth summer, and the other a sheep of monstrous size. Then the royal party set out on a hunt, but the chase took them so far afield that it was not until eight o'clock on that Saturday evening, the ninth of July, when the sun was near setting, that Kenilworth was reached.

Hardly had the queen entered the park of the castle than, from an arbour near the highway, there stepped forward a graceful maiden attired in white silk, who, as one of the Sibyls, greeted the illustrious guest with rhymes of welcome and prophecy.

"You shall be called the Prince of Peace,
And peace shall be your shield,
So that your eyes shall never see
The broils of bloody field.
If perfect peace then glad your mind,
He joys above the rest
Which doth receive into his house
So good and sweet a guest.
And one thing more I shall foretell;
As by my skill I know,
Your coming is rejoiced at
Ten thousand times and mo.

And while your Highness here abides,
 Nothing shall rest unsought,
 That may bring pleasure to your mind,
 Or quiet to your thought.
 And so pass forth in peace, O Prince
 Of high and worthy praise:
 The God that governs all in all,
 Increase your happy days! "

Resuming her progress to the castle, the queen, on passing the first gate into the tilt-yard, was brought to a halt once more by the protests of a stalwart porter who, clad in silk, and bearing a huge club in one hand and a bunch of keys in the other, fumed and stormed at this unseemly invasion of his domain. Such a riding to and fro, such shouting, such commotion he would not endure " while club and limbs do last." But as he caught sight of the queen anger gave place to amazement:

" What dainty darling's here?
 Oh God! a peerless Pearl!
 No worldly wight, no doubt;
 Some sovereign Goddess sure!
 Even face, even hand, even eye,
 Even other features all,
 Yea beauty, grace, and cheer,
 Yea port and majesty,
 Show all some heavenly peer,
 With virtues all beset,
 Come, come, most perfect Paragon;
 Pass on with joy and bliss:
 Most worthy welcome Goddess guest,
 Whose presence gladdeth all.

Have here, have here, both club and keys;
Myself my ward I yield;
Even gates and all, yea Lord himself,
Submit and seek your shield."

Although made free of the castle in such a generous fashion, Elizabeth was not allowed to "pass on" very far. No sooner had the six trumpeters, each ensconced in a pasteboard figure to make him of giant size, emphasized the porter's welcome by a musical blast on their tapering silver trumpets, than, over the waters of the lake, there floated towards the queen a "movable island, bright blazing with torches," on which stood the Lady of the Lake, another radiant maiden who, also in verse, implored her highness to listen to the ancient story of the castle she was gracing with her presence. Although doubtless weary with her day's ride and hunting, Elizabeth again drew rein. This time her patience was not greatly taxed, for the Lady of the Lake soon exhausted her seven stanzas with the couplet:

"Pass on, Madame, you need no longer stand;
The Lake, the Lodge, the Lord, are yours to command."

At this point the royal guest reached the temporary bridge that led to the inner ward of the castle, a structure some twenty feet in width and seventy feet in length. This was the climax of her picturesque welcome. At intervals of twelve feet the sides of the bridge were adorned with massive

posts in pairs, and an expositor, clad like a poet " in a long azure-blue garment," explained in Latin verse the symbolism of those seven pairs of posts. On the tops of the first pair were large wire cages filled with live bitterns and curlews and other dainty birds, and these were the offerings of Sylvanus the god of fowls; the second posts bore on their summits large silver bowls filled with apples, pears, cherries, filberts, oranges, and lemons, and these were the gifts of Pomona the goddess of fruit; on the third posts were other large silver bowls decorated with green and ripe ears of wheat, barley, oats, and beans, and these were the libation of Ceres the goddess of corn; on one of the fourth pair of posts a silvered bowl held luscious grapes in clusters white and red, while the companion pillar had by its side two silver pots of wine and two glasses filled to the brim with the red and white juice of the grape, and these were the oblation of Bacchus the god of wine; the fifth posts supported large trays in which, on a bed of fresh grass, were displayed all kinds of fish, and these were the offertory of Neptune god of the sea; the sixth posts were adorned with staves of silver, representing the rugged staff of Leicester's coat of arms, from which hung glittering pieces of armour and various weapons, and these were the gifts of Mars the god of war; to the seventh posts were affixed branches of bay, thickly arrayed with lutes, and viols, and

cornets, and flutes, and harps, and these were the oblation of Phœbus the god of music "for rejoicing the mind." As she reached the end of the bridge the much-welcomed monarch was saluted with a "delicate harmony" of music, to the accompaniment of which she dismounted and was conducted to her apartments. And as she reached her chamber there came so loud a peal of guns and such a blaze of fireworks that, as Laneham noted, it seemed as though Jupiter must add his greeting to the salutations of the other gods.

Such was the overture of the "Princely Pleasures" devised for Elizabeth's entertainment during those July days of 1575. To follow the programme in all its details for the seventeen days of the queen's visit would need a volume; to quote even a tithe of the flattering conceits in prose and verse that saluted the guest's ears wherever she moved, whether in the castle or its gardens or while following the hunt, would be tedious for those not accustomed to the fulsomeness of Elizabethan compliment. Save on the days when it was too hot for her to stir abroad until the cool of the afternoon, or during the mornings of those two Sundays which were given up to "divine service and preaching," Elizabeth had little opportunity to enjoy that quiet which the Sibyl had promised. If she went hunting she was waylaid by a "Savage man" representing Sylvanus, the god of the woods, who, clad in moss

and ivy, persisted in addressing her in a long oration, running after her horse at top speed when his victim made an effort to escape his tedious eloquence; if she but walked out to the bridge a barge-load of singers making " delectable music " floated towards her; if she wandered to the further shore of the lake a swimming mermaid implored the honour of taking her a voyage. All Kenilworth, indeed, seemed to be infested with satyrs and heathen gods and goddesses, and no matter which way Elizabeth turned there were surprises in store, Italian tumblers and dancers, bridal ceremonies, morris players, bear-baiting, tilts, prize-fights, and dazzling displays of fireworks. And day by day, through all the hours of each day, the tables were loaded with the costliest wines and viands, a provision which helps to explain why that high festival cost the host a thousand pounds a day.

In compliment to the royal guest, as though hinting that time itself stood still for her, the clock-bell of the castle was " commanded to silence " on her arrival and " sang not a note all the while her Highness was there." To heighten that conceit, too, the hands of the clock were halted and fixed at the hour of two, implying, as that was the time of the chief meal of the day, that there was bounteous store of refreshment for all comers at any moment. But those who had a thought and a glance to spare had only to gaze upward at the south wall of

Cæsar's Tower to be reminded that notwithstanding the silent bell and the stationary hands of the clock the hours of those refulgent days were being ruthlessly added to the irreparable past. For high up on that tower, nigh to the battlements, there shone the enamelled face of a sun-dial, over the golden figures of which glided steadily on that slender shadow which was ushering the " Princely Pleasures " of Kenilworth to oblivion.

CHAPTER IV

“ SHRIEKS OF AN AGONIZING KING ”

BERKELEY CASTLE

UNLIKE so many of the ancient castles of England, which in the majority of cases are mere roofless walls given over to the dominion of owls and bats, Berkeley Castle is still a perfect and inhabited home. More than seven centuries have gone by since it became the chief seat of the Fitzhardinge family, yet when viewed from a distance sufficiently remote to soften the details of modern additions the aspect of this romantic building is such that the observer might imagine himself transported to feudal times. Standing majestically on rising ground amid the verdant spaces of the Gloucestershire landscape, embedded in such a nature setting as gives no hint of the chronology of time, Berkeley Castle is in fact almost unique for the picture it gives of an old-time baronial home.

Nor is that impression much weakened by a stroll through its ancient hall and other state apartments. Of course many alterations have been made in accordance with modern ideas of domestic comfort, but these are in the main so unobtrusive that they do little to dispel that sensation of mediæval environment created by a distant view of the castle;

were they more pronounced than they are their effect would still be nullified by the many antique objects scattered through the building. It is true the fastidious Horace Walpole was somewhat disappointed with his visit to Berkeley a century and a half ago, but as on his own confession he "hurried through the chambers, and looked for nothing but the way out of every room," it would be absurd to accept him as an authority. He seems, however, to have been satisfied with the room shown as that in which the murder of Edward II was committed, though he boggled at the supposed death-mask of that king and voted it a representation of Charles I. That guess was wrong by one remove; according to the best authority the plaster in question is an image of Charles II.

Apparently Walpole was not shown or was in too much of a hurry to observe that ancient oak bedstead which used to be exhibited as the identical piece of furniture on which Edward II was so barbarously done to death; nor does he make any mention of the toilet service used by Queen Elizabeth, or the bed slept on by James I, or of that suite of inlaid furniture which accompanied Sir Francis Drake on his voyage round the world. He did catch a glimpse of some of the family portraits, only, however, to receive an impression which made him far from complimentary in his remarks on their artistic qualities.



BERKELEY CASTLE.

Now there was one of those portraits at least which deserved more careful attention; a portrait of a nephew of an Earl Godwin attired in a religious habit. Had Walpole observed that painting and enquired as to its history, he would have been entertained by a legend which would have tickled his fancy. For that curious picture is founded upon one of the delectable stories told in the “ Courtiers’ Triflings,” that gossipy book of anecdote written in the twelfth century by the jovial Walter Mapes. As the sedate Camden deemed it “ not unworthy ” of his readers’ perusal, Mapes may be allowed to repeat the legend in his own words. “ Berkeley is a village near Severn, in which was a nunnery governed by an abbess that was both noble and beautiful. Earl Godwin, a notable subtle man, not desiring her but hers, as he passed by left his nephew, a young, proper, handsome spark (under pretence of being seized with a sickness) till he should return back thither, and instructed him to counterfeit an indisposition till he had got all who came to visit him, both abbess and as many of the nuns as he could, with child. And, to carry on the intrigue more plausibly, and more effectually to obtain the favour of their visits, the earl furnished him with rings and girdles, that by those presents he might the more readily corrupt and gain their inclinations. There needed no great entreaty to persuade this young gallant to under-

take an employment so amorous and pleasing. The way to destruction is easy and quickly learnt; he seemed wonderful cunning to himself, but all his cunning was but folly. In him were concentrated all those accomplishments that might captivate foolish and unthinking virgins — beauty, wit, riches, and obliging mien; and he was mighty solicitous to have a private apartment to himself. The devil therefore expelled Pallas and brought in Venus, and converted the church of our Saviour and his Saints into an accursed pantheon, the temple into a stew, and the lambs into wolves. When many of them proved with child, and the youth began to languish, being overcome with excess and variety of pleasure, he hastened home with the reports of his conquests. The earl immediately addresses the king, and acquaints him that the abbess and the nuns were gotten with child, and had rendered themselves prostitutes to all comers: all which, upon inquisition, was found true. Upon the expulsion of the nuns, he begs Berkeley, and had it granted to him by the king.” Such is the story by which Mapes explained how a nunnery gave place to a castle — a story which savours of Boccaccio, and might be used to convict both him and Anatole France of plagiarism.

If Earl Godwin did obtain possession of the site of Berkeley Castle by that ingenious stratagem, it was not his family but another that enjoyed the

benefit. And so far as the present castle is concerned its oldest portions do not date further back than the first half of the twelfth century. It would appear, too, that the manor of Berkeley was presented to Robert Fitzhardinge by Henry II in reward for the “ great substance of gods ” which the said Robert had contributed towards the expenses of that king’s warlike expeditions.

Seven barons of Berkeley had run their course ere there succeeded to the title that Thomas de Berkeley who was the owner of the castle at the time when it became the scene of the most tragic episode of its history. During the interval several kings had visited the stronghold, Henry I in 1121, John in 1216, and Henry III in 1255. At the time when so many of the barons revolted against Edward II and his favourites the Despensers, the lord of Berkeley, Maurice by name, having married a daughter of the Mortimer family, took arms against his king, but was captured and committed to prison, where he died in 1326, his manor and castle being presented by Edward to the younger Despenser. Maurice’s heir, too, Thomas de Berkeley, a young man of some twenty summers, was also imprisoned in Pevensey Castle. It was at this crisis in the fortunes of the family that, as related in a previous chapter, Isabella landed in England with Mortimer and her foreign army.

One of the results of Isabella’s rebellion against

her husband was the immediate release of Thomas de Berkeley and his restoration to his castle. And shortly thereafter he was called upon to demonstrate his gratitude for his release.

Edward must have realized that his situation was hopeless even before Isabella's arrival. All his efforts to gather an army had failed; the citizens of London turned a deaf ear to his appeals for help, and many of his followers deserted him. Hence as soon as his queen reached England he fled westward, only to become her captive ere two months had passed. For a time he was imprisoned in Kenilworth, to be removed in the Spring of 1327 and transferred to castle after castle as soon as the secret of his whereabouts was disclosed. At last he was taken to Bristol, but on it being rumoured that a plot had been formed for his release it was decided to conduct him to Berkeley Castle. "They brought him to Berkeley in the night," says an old historian; "made him ride in thin cloathing, with his head uncovered; would not let him sleep, nor have what food he liked; contradicted every word he said; accused him of being mad; and in short did everything they could to kill him, without direct violence, by cold, waking, and misery. In riding to Berkeley through the granges of the Castle of Bristol, Gurney put a crown of hay upon his head, the soldiers in mockery crying, 'Fare forth Sir King!' Lest any of his friends should recognize and rescue



KING EDWARD'S PRISON, BERKELEY CASTLE.

him, they resolved to disguise him, by cutting off his hair and beard. Accordingly, seating him upon a mole-hill, they took cold water from a ditch and shaved him. He burst into tears.”

Notwithstanding this it is affirmed that Isabella reproved her husband's guards for their too mild treatment! Thomas of Berkeley, indeed, appears to have been a humane jailor; although he was allowed but a modest daily sum for his prisoner's maintenance, he seems to have treated him well so long as he was master in his own castle. There came a time, however, in the late summer of 1327, when Isabella and Mortimer decided that their hold on the government of the kingdom was too precarious to allow Edward to live. So the lord of Berkeley was commanded to deliver up the custody of his castle to Thomas de Gournay and John Maltravers, who speedily applied more stringent measures of dealing with the royal prisoner. The room beneath his dungeon was filled with putrid carcases in the hope that he would contract some pestilential and fatal disease; when that failed it was resolved to end his life by a method which is unique in the annals of fiendish brutality. On the night of the twenty-first of September he was surprised in his sleep, smothered with heavy beds, and, while so held, was infamously murdered by a hot iron being thrust into his bowels. Legend tells that his fearful cries of anguish resounded throughout the castle, a tra-

dition which was in the mind of the poet Gray when he wrote :

“ Weave the warp, and weave the woof,
The winding-sheet of Edward’s race.
Give ample room, and verge enough
The characters of hell to trace.
Mark the year, and mark the night,
When Severn shall re-echo with affright
The shrieks of death, thro’ Berkeley’s roof that ring,
Shrieks of an agonizing king!
She-wolf of France, with unrelenting fangs,
That tear’st the bowels of thy mangled mate.”

Judging from those lines, Gray had no doubt of the share of Isabella in the inhuman murder of her husband, but the only person who eventually suffered death for that diabolical crime was her paramour Mortimer. An apology for a trial was, it is true, held soon after the event, at which the lord of Berkeley was charged as the chief culprit, but it ended in verdict of mere “negligence!” Nay, within a year Isabella and Mortimer had the hardihood to visit the very castle where their victim had met his terrible doom, while shortly after the young Edward III duly confirmed Thomas of Berkeley in all his possessions and granted him several new privileges.

Whatever his responsibility for that harrowing tragedy which casts so sombre a shadow over the annals of his castle, Thomas of Berkeley lived long and prospered. Several important embassies were

entrusted to his charge, and he was a prominent commander in that army which achieved so signal a victory at Crecy. His more domestic years were spent at Berkeley in great splendour, for his personal attendants included a dozen knights, who each had two servants and a page, and twenty-four esquires, who had two menials apiece. The household at Berkeley was so numerous, amounting to three hundred people, that the castle in those days must have presented the appearance of a royal court. All the retainers had their specific livery, the knights being attired in robes of scarlet edged with miniver fur, the esquires in ray cloth furred, and the under-servants in cloth trimmed with cony or lambskin. In keeping with all this it is not surprising to learn that there were always a hundred horses in the stables at Berkeley; that the husbandry of the lord was on an immense scale; that he was, like all his race, a mighty hunter; and that he made important additions to his castle buildings. From his orchards, and the adjacent River Severn, and from his well-stocked parks, presents of fruit and fish and game were frequently dispatched, now a dish of pears, anon a porpoise, and again a buck. On one of his journeys this Thomas of Berkeley took with him no fewer than nine lamprey pies for gifts to important persons. It is of the period of this lord we learn that when a baron's letter was read “ the commons present would move their bonnets in

token of reverence " for the writer's name and person.

So keen a hunter was that Thomas of Berkeley that when following the fox he would lie the night long in fields or woods, a passion for sport which was still more highly developed in one of his descendants of the sixteenth century. This lord, Henry of Berkeley, was so determined to have the best hawks in England that he often sent one of his servants to purchase the finest on the continent and always kept a man in London to secure him the first choice of all birds offered there. So highly, too, did he esteem those who were connected with his sport that while he gave his steward authority to dismiss all other servants he specially excepted his huntsmen and falconers.

In all the records of those far-off years it is but rarely the lady of the castle makes any definite figure. What was true of one, that in the forty years of her wedded life she never travelled more than ten miles from home, could doubtless have been chronicled of many. But an exception must be made in favour of that Lady Anne Berkeley whose lot was cast in the days of Henry VIII. She at least was more than a lay figure in her lord's household, for it is recorded of her that in winter and summer alike she rose early to make a tour of the stables, barns, dairies, poultry-yards, and the like. All her efforts to inspire her daughter-in-law with like

energy were such a dismal failure that she would ejaculate: “ By God’s blessed sacrament, this gay girl will beggar my son! ”

It appears that this industrious lady had been commended to the lord of Berkeley by Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn, and when she was early left a widow the king of many marriages seems to have suggested a second match for her in the person of a poor nobleman named John, Lord Dudley. That impecunious peer, alive to the advantages of such a wealthy match, addressed himself to the wooing of the widow with alacrity. And at first the Lady Anne entertained him “ after the most loving sort,” for — he tells the story himself — “ when she was in her chamber sewing, she would suffer me to lie in her lap, with many other as familiar fashions as I could desire.” As soon, however, as she learned my Lord John was a serious wooer, backed with the recommendation of the king and the Lord Cromwell, the widow became coy and indifferent. She made me a “ very light answer,” so the Lord John reported, “ that she is not minded to marry.” But the Lady Anne was in earnest in that answer; alarmed lest she might be forced into a union with so impoverished a peer she addressed herself to Cromwell to assure him that she could not with her heart “ bear fair ” to her suitor to “ accomplish his high desire.” In fact, she was not minded to marry at all; “ my stomach cannot lean there,” she added,

“neither as yet to any marriage.” Nor did she ever change her opinion; apparently she was more content to remain the widow of the lord of Berkeley than to become the wife of any other noble.

It was her son Henry whose wife was such a “gay girl” and who was lord of the castle when it was visited by Queen Elizabeth in 1572. He it was, too, who was so proud of his hawks and such a keen devotee of the chase. One can understand, then, his indignation at an incident of Elizabeth’s visit. Pretending some claim to a part of the Berkeley estates, the Earl of Leicester, imagining himself a privileged person, collected a mob of his followers and broke down the pales of one of the parks. Nor was that all. In the absence of the lord of the castle, Elizabeth’s visit being apparently unexpected, her retinue invited themselves to a hunt of Lord Henry’s herd of red deer, and “such slaughter was made as twenty-seven stags were slain in the toils on one day, and many others on that and the next stolen and havocked.”

No wonder the lord of the castle protested and disparked his ground. News of what he had done soon reached Elizabeth’s ears, who caused him to be informed how displeased she was at the umbrage he had taken at the “good sport” she had enjoyed in his park, and concluded her message with a significant hint that my Lord of Leicester had taken “no small liking” to the manor of Berkeley.

Other notable visitors to the scene of Edward II's murder included James I, attracted thither perhaps by the excellence of the hunting; and George IV and Edward VII. Here, then, is a castle which links the kings of England together from the twelfth to the twentieth century, a record hardly less unique than that this romantic building has for so many centuries been the home of the Fitzhardinge race. A seventeenth-century historian of the family entertained the opinion that as the castle stands on the site of a nunnery it would, because on holy ground, continue happily in the Fitzhardinge possession, and thus far that historian has proved a singularly accurate prophet.

CHAPTER V

A NURSERY OF KINGS

LUDLOW CASTLE

WITH the exceptions of Windsor Castle and the Tower of London, there is no mediæval fortress which has so intimate a connection with the royal lineage of England as the castle of Ludlow. The name of that Shropshire town might have been chosen in prophetic anticipation of that fact, for Camden assures us that the Welsh name of Ludlow means "the Prince's Palace." It may be hoped that the antiquary was more correct in that piece of etymology than in his other assertion that Ludlow is a "town of greater beauty than antiquity." It is something to find the topographer paying his tribute to the rare charm of that border town; why he should cast a slur on its antiquity must puzzle any one acquainted with its lengthy history.

To justify the description of Ludlow Castle as a nursery of kings is not a difficult task, for many of the boyhood years of three heirs to the English throne were spent within its walls, while a fourth but female sovereign lived here for about a year and a half in her maidenhood. Notwithstanding those associations, however, and despite the further fact that the castle is rich in other historical and literary

memories, the building is little known to either the tourist or the average Englishman. Lying off the beaten track, this countryside of the Welsh borderland only needs its poet or novelist to make it the rival of the most popular districts of England. For than the hills and dales around Ludlow, with their ancient villages and towns, their sites of battle-fields and religious foundations, their castles and manor houses, there is no equal area of John Bull's island so rich in object lessons of the romantic past. Nature, too, has been lavish of her charms. Here are meandering lanes fringed by luscious hedgerows and sentinelled by clumps of bosky trees, unhurrying water-courses bordered of reed and willow making a cool home for the idly-moving trout, farm-houses dozing lazily in sunshine and cottages embowered in creepers and old-world flowers, and venerable village churches, orderly within and without as become temples of faith. And the whole is dominated by the grey walls of that "beautiful and strong castle" which have sheltered the infancy of many an English sovereign.

First on the list of those royal children whose days of youthful happiness were spent in Ludlow Castle comes the spirited Edward, Earl of March, the eldest son of that Richard, Duke of York, who had a far stronger claim to the English throne than the weak Lancastrian, Henry VI, who was enjoying the fruits of his grandfather's usurpation. As the

reader of history will recall, there came a time when it was thought that the conflict between the White and Red roses had been ended by that compromise by which the Duke of York was recognized as Henry VI's heir, a delusion which was exposed when Henry's ambitious queen resolved to continue the struggle in the interests of her son. The Yorkists, however, never wavered in their allegiance to the champion of the White rose, and hence the Earl of March, the eldest son of Richard, Duke of York, was regarded by them as being, next to his father, the indubitable heir to the crown.

As Ludlow Castle was the chief seat of his father it was natural that his childhood should be spent within its walls, where he had for his chief companion his younger brother, Edmund, Earl of Rutland. Two other sons were born to their father, namely, George, who became Duke of Clarence and lives in history as the prince who was drowned in a butt of malmsey wine, and Richard, who reigned as Richard III; but as these two were much younger than Edward and Edmund they do not seem to have figured much in the boyhood life of their elder brothers.

In fact our knowledge of the Ludlow days of the youth who became Edward IV is practically restricted to the inferences which may be drawn from a couple of letters addressed by him and his brother to their father. Both these epistles, each subscribed



THE PRINCES' TOWER, LUDLOW CASTLE.

“Written at your castle of Ludlow,” belong to the year 1454, when Edward was in his twelfth year, and as they are so little known they deserve quotation almost in full. The earlier of these letters runs thus:

“Right high and right mighty prince, our full redoubted and right noble lord and father, as lowly as with all our hearts as we your true and natural sons can or may, we recommend us unto your noble grace, humbly beseeching your noble and worthy fatherhood daily to give us your hearty blessing, through which we trust much the rather to increase and grow to virtue, and to speed the better in all matters and things that we shall use, occupy, and exercise. Right high and right mighty prince, our full redoubted lord and father, we thank our blessed Lord not only of your honourable conduct and good speed in all your matters and business, and of your gracious prevail against the designs and malice of your evil-willers, but also of the knowledge that it pleased your nobility to let us now late have of the same. . . . And also we thank your nobleness and good fatherhood of our green gowns, now sent unto us to our great comfort, beseeching your good lordship to remember our breviary, and that we might have some fine bonnets sent unto us by the next sure messenger, for necessity so requireth.” In that last request the discerning may detect how the child is father to the man, for the historians have noted that

Edward IV was distinguished for a love of fine raiment.

For the better understanding of the second letter it is needful to remember that the Duke of York had been appointed protector of the kingdom, and that when he wrote the message to which his sons' letter is an answer he was at York quelling some disturbance.

“ Right high and mighty Prince,” his sons wrote, “ our most worshipful and greatly redoubted lord and father, in as lowly wise as any sons can or may we recommend us unto your good lordship. And please it your highness to wit that we have received your worshipful letters yesterday by your servant, bearing date at York the 29th day of May, by the which we conceive your worshipful and victorious speed against your enemies, to their great shame, and to us the most comfortable tidings that we desired to hear. Whereof we thank Almighty God of his gifts, beseeching Him heartily to give you that grace and daily fortune hereafter to know your enemies and to have victory of them. And if it please your highness to know of our welfare, at the making of this letter we were in good health of body, thanks be God; beseeching your good and gracious fatherhood of your daily blessing. And where ye command us by your said letters to attend specially to our learning in our young age that should cause us to grow to honour and worship in our old age,

please it your highness to wit that we have attended our learning since we came hither, and shall hereafter; by the which we trust to God your gracious lordship and good fatherhood shall be pleased." There were no acknowledgments this time of "green gowns" or requests for "fine bonnets;" all the lads pleaded for was that their father would send to them a certain groom of his kitchen whose service had been "right agreeable" to them, in return for whom they would despatch one John Boyes to wait on their right high and mighty father.

Five years later, so early were the scions of noble houses in those turbulent days required to bear their share in the conflicts of the Roses, the Earl of March was fighting by his father's side. His mother and his two younger brothers had remained at Ludlow, only to fall into the hands of the Lancastrians. This was in the autumn of 1459; in the March of the following year, so rapidly did events move, the young earl was proclaimed king as Edward IV. And it speaks well for his memory of his boyhood days at Ludlow that in the first year of his reign he demonstrated his affection for the town by granting it a charter considerably extending its franchises and relieving the borough from all feudal dependence.

Thenceforward, indeed, so long as Edward lived the town could always count upon his steadfast and powerful friendship. Its situation on the Welsh

borders subjected it to many dangers, for the lawless Welsh lost no opportunity of plundering their richer neighbours. Hence the petition of 1472, in which the king was asked to consider the wrongs of those of his subjects who lived in that "land adjoining the country of Wales" and were suffering so severely from the "outrageous demeanour" of the Welsh robbers. It was in answer to that appeal that Edward decided upon an innovation in the government of his realm. Although his eldest son, Edward, was a mere infant, he created him Prince of Wales, and shortly thereafter dispatched him to Ludlow Castle to hold his court there as representing the power of the throne. In other words, as an old chronicle states, the heir to the crown was sent to Ludlow "for justice to be done in the marches of Wales, to the end that by the authority of his presence the wild Welshmen and evil disposed persons should refrain from their accustomed murders and outrages." This scheme answered another purpose; it was necessary to provide his son with an establishment where he could be educated and trained for his future responsibility, and, remembering his boyhood, what was more natural than for Edward's choice to fall upon the castle in which he had spent his own years of tuition?

When the king had formulated his plan to send his son to Ludlow, and had appointed his guardians, he drafted a constitution for the regulation of his

household, a copy of which still exists among the manuscripts of Lambeth Palace. That document is at once an eloquent testimony of the careful thought Edward bestowed upon the smallest details of his son's training for his future life, and a curious illustration of how royal households were conducted in the fifteenth century.

Turning first to those regulations which more immediately concerned the companions and servants of the young prince — the former being “sons of noble lords and gentlemen” — we find that elaborate provision was made for their religious welfare, there being no fewer than three chaplains in attendance, who were enjoined to say mass at six o'clock every morning, matins at seven, and song mass at nine. The two chief meals of the day, dinner and supper, were to be served at ten and four o'clock respectively; the gates of the castle were in winter to be opened between six and seven and closed at nine, and in summer from between five and six to ten at night; and while all “dishonest or unknown” persons were at all times to be denied entrance to the castle the warders were strictly charged that they “suffer no man to enter the said gates with weapons.” To ensure the good conduct of the servants all were forbidden to “use words of ribaldry;” no retainer was to practise extortion on the townsfolk; and if any quarrelled to the extent of blows they were to be put in the stocks for

a first offence and dismissed for a second. The king also framed minute regulations for the keeping of his son's accounts, expressly charging, however, that one of the chaplains was to act as the prince's almoner and "discreetly, and diligently give and distribute our said son's alms to poor people." Nor did he forget the wise proviso that the household should always include a "sufficient and cunning" physician.

Although less stringent in the appointing of fixed hours for his religious duties, meals, tuition and recreation, the ordinances relating to the daily life of the prince were as explicit as those for the government of his household. He was to arise every morning "at a convenient hour, according to his age," hear matins in his chamber, then proceed to mass in the chapel, which was to be followed immediately by breakfast. The subsequent morning hours were to be devoted to "such virtuous learning as his age shall suffer to receive;" dinner was to be served at a suitable hour, during which meal were to be read to him "such noble stories as behoveth a prince to understand and know;" after dinner he was to be indulged in "convenient games and exercises;" then even-song, supper, and to his bed by eight o'clock. And throughout the night a "good and sure watch" was to be kept over his person.

Such, in brief outline, was the "daily round and

common task " of Prince Edward's life in Ludlow Castle in those long-spent years of the fifteenth century. The talk he heard day by day was to be " of virtue, honour, knowledge, wisdom, and of deeds of worship, and of nothing that should move or stir him to vice." As he grew in boyish years he had the companionship of his brother Richard, and frequently the two lads were gladdened by their mother's presence. Rarely can they have seen their kingly father, but that he was not forgetful of them may be inferred from the frequent presents of cloth of gold and purple and green velvet which were sent to Ludlow for their wardrobe. The traditions of the town have preserved the memory of the two princes to this day, for the apartments in the far corner of the inner courtyard are still pointed out as the Princes' Tower.

¶ Ten years fled, and then, on an April day of 1483, sombre news came to Ludlow. The king was dead. So that lad of thirteen summers was monarch in his father's stead, King Edward V of England. Some two weeks later he bade farewell to the home of his happy childhood, for it behoved him to proceed to his capital of London. Met on the journey by his ruthless Uncle Richard, he was conveyed to the Tower of London, where, in the company of that brother who had been his playmate at Ludlow, a few months later two brutal gaolers smothered him as he slept.

\ To Prince Edward succeeded Prince Arthur. Having married Elizabeth of York, the eldest daughter of Edward IV, it was perhaps natural that Henry VII should follow the example of his predecessor in sending his eldest born son to keep his court in Ludlow Castle. The birth of Prince Arthur was the occasion of great rejoicing, for the child was another pledge against a renewal of the Wars of the Roses. His christening in the glorious minster of Winchester was performed with stately ceremonial; his creation as Prince of Wales was made a gorgeous pageant; his betrothal to Catherine of Aragon flattered the pride of English and Spanish alike. Such glowing reports of his future wife reached the youth that his love-letters to her written from Ludlow Castle have all the passion of genuine affection. "I have read" — so ran one of those epistles — "the most sweet letters of your highness lately given to me, from which I easily perceive your most entire love to me. Truly those your letters, traced by your own hand, have so delighted me, and have rendered me so cheerful and jocund, that I fancied I beheld your highness and conversed with and embraced my dearest spouse. I cannot tell you what an earnest desire I feel to see your highness, and how vexatious to me is this procrastination about your coming. I owe eternal thanks to your excellence that you so lovingly correspond to this my so ardent love. Let it continue, I entreat,



PRINCE ARTHUR'S TOWER, LUDLOW CASTLE.

as it has begun; and, like as I cherish your sweet remembrance night and day, so do you preserve my name ever fresh in your breast. And let your coming to me be hastened, that instead of being absent we may be present with each other." Catherine's reply to this letter, penned "from our castle of Ludlow," is unfortunately lost; she could not complain that her thirteen-year-old lover was a juvenile wooer.

But the impatient youth had to wait still another two years ere he clasped his "dearest wife" to his heart. The marriage ceremony, which took place in London in November, 1501, was even more resplendent than that which had celebrated his creation as Prince of Wales, and shortly after the completion of the festivities by which it was commemorated the young couple were dispatched to that Ludlow Castle where Prince Arthur had spent so many of his boyhood years. Whether the two ever cohabited as man and wife was to become a serious problem of state in future years; the one sure fact in the history of their wedded life is that in less than five months Catherine of Aragon was a widow.

It was in Ludlow Castle the young prince died, most probably in that apartment still known as Prince Arthur's Tower. Although never of robust health, his death was so sudden and unexpected that the bearer of the tidings to his parents had an unusually arduous task, as is obvious from the pathetic

account of the manner in which the news was imparted. On the arrival of the messenger from Ludlow the members of the council decided that the king's confessor would be the most suitable person to communicate the heavy and sorrowful tidings, and desired him "in his best manner to show it to the King. He," so the narrative continues, "in the morning of the Tuesday following, somewhat before the time accustomed, knocked at the King's chamber door, and when the King understood it was his confessor, he commanded to let him in. The confessor then commanded all those present to avoid, and after due salutation began to say 'Si bona de manu Dei suscipimus, mala autem quare non sustineamus,' and so showed his Grace that his dearest son was departed to God. When his Grace understood that sorrowful tidings, he sent for the Queen, saying that he and his Queen would take the painful sorrows together. After that she was come and saw the King her lord, and that natural and painful sorrow, as I have heard say, she, with full great and constant comfortable words besought his Grace that he would first after God remember the weal of his own noble person, the comfort of his realm, and of her. She then said, that my lady, his mother, had never no more children but him only, and that God by his grace had ever preserved him, and brought him where that he was. Over that, how that God had left him yet a fair prince, two fair princesses; and

that God is where he was, and we are both young enough; and that the prudence and wisdom of his Grace sprung over all Christendom, so that it should please him to take this according thereunto. Then the King thanked her of her good comfort. After that she was departed and come to her own chamber, natural and motherly remembrance of that great loss smote her so sorrowful to the heart, that those that were about her were fain to send for the King to comfort her. Then his Grace, of true, gentle, and faithful love, in good haste came and relieved her, and showed how wise counsel she had given him before; and he, for his part, would thank God for his son, and would she should do in like wise."

Nigh a quarter of a century elapsed ere another scion of the royal house was sent to Ludlow. In the interval Catherine of Aragon had become the wife of Arthur's brother, Henry VIII, and it was their child, the Princess Mary, for whom a new court was established in the fortress of the border town. Mary came hither in the late summer of 1525, when she was in her ninth year, and her governess, the Countess of Salisbury, was given almost as many instructions as the guardians of Prince Edward. She was to have a "tender regard" for everything that concerned the "honourable education" and "virtuous demeanour" of the princess, at the same time allowing her to use "moderate exercise" in

the gardens. Here Mary remained for a year and a half, the last of her royal race to represent the sovereign power of England on the borders of Wales.

But, such is the wealth of history attaching to this venerable building, the royal associations of Ludlow Castle form no more than a parenthesis in its annals; as its chronicle is linked with famous names subsequent to the departure of the Princess Mary, so it had gathered a unique harvest of romance ere it became the boyhood home of Edward IV. Something of that romance is perpetuated in the name of one of its towers, for Mortimer's Tower recalls how a twelfth-century lord of the castle captured and imprisoned there his enemy of Wigmore. That exploit is attributed to Sir Joyce de Dinan, who has, however, left a more satisfying memorial of his activity in the unique little circular Norman chapel of the inner courtyard. Legend tells, too, of another prisoner confined here who secured his release by the time-honoured device of making love to a "very gentle damsel," his final betrayal of whom resulted in tragedy for them both.

After the death of Prince Arthur, the council which had been entrusted with his affairs was continued as a regular court of jurisdiction for the government of the borderland, its president being honoured with the title of the Lord Marcher. Many notable men were promoted to that vice-regal office,

but of them all the most distinguished was that Sir Henry Sidney who was responsible for the building of those handsome Elizabethan apartments which cluster about the inner gate-house. Thus Ludlow Castle was for some seven and twenty years the chief home of the sire of the illustrious Sir Philip Sidney, and many a moving incident of his domestic history is associated with these time-stained walls. Here, too, he died, grown prematurely old in the thankless service of Queen Elizabeth, leaving his heart to be buried in that church where he had laid the corpse of his beloved youngest daughter.

Later among the Lord Marchers came John, Earl of Bridgewater, he for whose accession to that high post one John Milton dreamed and penned his masque of "Comus." Legend has been busy with that event ever since. Facing the castle walls is a lovely half-timbered house in which Milton is affirmed to have written his lyrical drama, and far down beneath those same walls is a tangled grove of wild woodland in which, so tradition avers, three children of the Earl of Bridgewater lost their way and so gave the poet the germ of his plot. The higher criticism, however, will have naught to do with these pretty fancies, leaving the sentimentalist nothing more than the fact that "Comus" was indubitably performed for the first time in that noble apartment now known as the "'Comus' Hall."

If Milton never visited Ludlow, another poet did. In ante-civil war days, when the Puritan with his nasal intonation and cropped hair and severe garb made him an irresistible subject for satire, Samuel Butler sketched his portrait at full length in "Hudibras," and the greater part of that unfaltering picture took shape within the hoary walls of Ludlow Castle, where the poet held the office of steward. That was an adequate Nemesis for the devastation the building had suffered at the hands of the Round-heads. When the castle came into their possession they made an inventory of its contents and sold everything with the exception of a set of tapestry hangings; those, the most valuable of all the plenishings, became the perquisite of Oliver Cromwell. Consequently when Butler took up his abode here as steward he had to spend a considerable sum in furnishing his rooms. By the first decade of the eighteenth century most of the apartments had been made habitable once more, but soon after the accession of the first of the Georges an order was given to strip the lead from the roof of the buildings, the inevitable result of which was that the castle soon began to fall into ruin. Hence the decay of this noble building is due to George I's desire to fill his flaccid Hanoverian pockets.

Had Ludlow Castle no such links with the historic past as have been described, the glorious view from its watch-tower would be reward enough for a pil-



THE DOORWAY OF THE KEEP, LUDLOW CASTLE.

grimage to its walls. Away to the setting sun spacious green meadows diapered with tangled hedge-rows and umbrageous trees stretch to the purple hills, disclosing a feast of beauty which proves once more that ancient castle builders had a deeper æsthetic sense than moderns believe.

CHAPTER VI

AN OUTPOST OF THE CIVIL WAR

RAGLAN CASTLE

No impeachment of the hardness of the Puritan spirit could possibly exceed that of the piles of petitions which repose in the archives of the House of Lords, few of which have yet been woven into the history of the civil war of the seventeenth century. One of those documents, dated the 16th of December, 1646, and described as the "Petition of Henry Earl of Worcester," told how the suppliant was nearly fourscore years, how owing to age and infirmity he could not walk in his chamber or move in his bed without help, and how he had no money with which to pay his necessary expenses. As he felt the sands of life were fast ebbing, he implored the Parliament that he might "die out of restraint" and also have some allowance for his maintenance. On which piteous document is inscribed the terse indorsement: "Nothing done. Dead."

One request of the dying old peer had, however, been granted by the austere Parliament, the credit of which is nullified by the fact that in this case it cost nothing to be complaisant. He had asked that

he might be buried in his family vault in St. George's Chapel at Windsor, and on learning that such permission had been accorded he, with a touch of his old sprightliness, ejaculated: "Why, God bless us all! then I shall have a better castle when I am dead than they took from me when I was alive!"

For Henry Somerset, fifth earl and first marquis of Worcester, was one of the many nobles whose loyalty to Charles I had reduced him from wealth to beggary and had removed him from a castle to a prison. Yet surely it was but a flash of courtier-like compliment which had made him describe his king's palace at Windsor as a "better castle" than his own of Raglan. "Better" in the sense of more imposing royal Windsor unquestionably was, but for beauty of situation and picturesqueness of architecture the Monmouthshire home of the Somersets can hold its own with any castle in the kingdom. It may be doubted, indeed, whether there is anywhere a more romantically lovely ruin.

Copious is the anthology of its praise. "A fair and pleasant castle, with two parks adjacent" is the tribute of Leland; "a fair house of the Earl of Worcester's, built castle-like" is Camden's phrase; "the magnificent house of the marquis of Worcester" is the comment of Clarendon; while the soldier-poet of the sixteenth century, Thomas Churchyard, amplified his admiration in these lines:

“ A famous castle fine
 That Raglan hight, stands moated almost round;
 Made of free-stone, upright, as straight as line,
 Whose workmanship in beauty doth abound,
 With curious knots, wrought all with edged tool:
 The stately Tower that looks o’er pond and pool;
 The fountain trim, that runs both day and night,
 Doth yield in show a rare and noble sight.”

A later eulogist described the building as the “ brightest gem ” of the Somerset possessions; to Ruskin it was the “ sweetest ” of all the records of human pride. He thought of the lovely ruin as standing in utter solitude “ amidst the wild wood of its own pleasance, the towers rounded with ivy, and the forest roots choked with undergrowth, and the brook languid amidst lilies and sedges.” To these panegyrics must be added the lines in which a more modern poet enshrined its spirit of romance and paid tribute to the faithfulness which laid the building in ruin.

“ Stranger! ponder here awhile;
 Pause in Raglan’s ruined pile;
 All that wealth and power, combined,
 With skill to plan, and taste refined,
 To rear a structure fit to be
 The home of England’s chivalry,
 Was lavished here! where, met in hall,
 Mailed barons kept their festival;
 The night in lordly wassail spent —
 The day in tilt and tournament:
 Yet still, when England’s woes began,
 Were first to arm and lead the van;



THE TOWER OF GWENT, RAGLAN CASTLE.

To shield the Monarch in his need,
In Freedom's glorious cause to bleed;
To loyalty surrendering all —
Then, with their falling King to fall! ”

Beautiful as the castle is in decay, suggesting by its stately towers, its exquisite masonry, its finely proportioned windows and doorways, the picture of lordly magnificence it must have presented in the heyday of its glory, an old manuscript which describes its appearance prior to the outbreak of the civil war makes the reader realize how far the reality must have exceeded all that his fancy can imagine. The writer dwells lovingly upon its three gates, upon the massive Tower of Gwent which took no impression from the heavy cannon-balls of the Roundheads, upon the arched bridge with its battlemented turrets, upon the noble hall with its rare roof of Irish oak, upon the parlours and dining-room and chapel, upon the pitched court with its marble fountain, upon the pleasant walks adorned with “ figures of the Roman emperors in arches of divers varieties of shell works,” upon the spacious bowling-green “ much liked by his late Majesty for its situation,” upon the verdant gardens and “ fair built summer-houses,” upon the fish pond of many acres, and the orchard and parks thickly planted with large beeches and richly stocked with deer.

Nor is that the only document which helps us to recall in what princely state the Marquis of Worces-

ter kept house at Raglan Castle in those days when he became the host of his fugitive king. Another old manuscript gives a prodigious list of the officers and menial servants of his establishment, enumerates and names the steward, the tutor, the secretary, the master of the horse, the surveyors and auditors, the master of the fishponds, the server, the gentlemen waiters and pages, the ushers of the hall, the masters of wardrobe and armory and stable, the yeomen of the cellar and pantry and buttery, the porters and ploughmen, and the countless other retainers who served my lord marquis in one capacity or other.

\ Such was the castle and such were the members of the household when, on a July day of 1645, King Charles I asked admission within its gates. His cause was almost hopeless; the victory of the Parliament on the battlefield of Naseby had scattered his forces and driven him westward in the expectation that he might recruit his strength among the loyalists of that country. And, in the meantime, he knew that the Marquis of Worcester, despite the fact that he was a Catholic, would accord him the hospitality of his noble castle. On the arms of the gateway he could read the proud motto of the Somerset line: “ *Mutare vel timere sperno* ” (“ I scorn to change or fear ”), in itself an encouraging welcome to the harassed monarch.

But a warmer greeting awaited him than that



THE GATEWAY OF THE BOWLING - GREEN, RAGLAN CASTLE.

carved motto. As Charles drew rein at the gate he was received by the kneeling marquis who, having kissed his sovereign's hand, saluted him with, "*Domine! non sum dignus,*" to which the king rejoined, "My Lord, I may very well answer you again: 'I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel.' No man would trust me with so much money as you have done." Nor did that interchange of compliment end the little ceremony. Obedient to the custom of nobles when visited by their monarch, the marquis handed Charles the keys of his castle; and when the king gave them back he added: "I beseech your Majesty to keep them, if you please, for they are in a good hand; but I am afraid that ere long I shall be forced to deliver them into the hands of those who will spoil the compliment."

Thrice during those anxious days of the summer of 1645 did Charles avail himself of the hospitality of Raglan Castle. And many incidents are recorded of the loyalty still cherished for him by the people of that Monmouthshire countryside. When the Rev. Thomas Swift, vicar of Goodrich, heard that his king was in need of money, he at once mortgaged his little estate for three hundred board pieces and, having had those coins quilted into his waistcoat, set out for Raglan Castle. "The governor, who knew him well, asked what was his errand. 'I am come,' said Swift, 'to give his Majesty my coat,'

at the same time pulling it off and presenting it. The governor told him pleasantly that his coat was little worth. 'Well, then,' said Swift, 'take my waistcoat.' This was soon found to be a useful garment by its weight; and it is remarked by my Lord Clarendon that the King received no supply more seasonable or acceptable than these three hundred broad pieces during the whole war.'" The king was never in a position to repay that generous deed, and Swift not only lost his money but was ejected from his living by the Parliament.

Fearful lest his numerous retinue should exhaust the supplies of the castle, Charles offered to empower his host to levy for food on the surrounding country. There was no necessity for that. Not only was the marquis averse to such compulsion, but he knew he could count upon the assistance of the tenants of his manor. In fact, those tenants had subscribed their names to a pledge to provide corn and other supplies as they were able, a covenant which they faithfully observed until the last. Nor did the royal table lack even for delicacies. It so happened that a brother of the marquis, Sir Thomas Somerset, lived close by at a house called Troy, and that Sir Thomas was an expert gardener and grower of rare fruits. As his trees were in full bearing at the time of the royal visit to Raglan he sent a large present of his produce to the castle, which his brother the marquis insisted upon offering to his

illustrious guest with his own hands. Having threaded a little basket on one arm, and taking in either hand a silver dish, the venerable peer approached the king after supper and addressed him thus:

“May it please your Majesty, if the four elements could have been robbed to have entertained your Majesty, I think I had done my duty; but I must do as I may. If I had sent to Bristol for some good things to entertain your Majesty, there had been no wonder at all. If I had procured from London some goodness that might have been acceptable to your Majesty, that had been no wonder indeed. But here I present your Majesty with that which neither came from Lincoln that was, nor London that is, nor York that is to be; but I assure your Majesty that this present came from Troy.”

Charles was ready with a fit rejoinder. “Truly, my lord,” he said with a smile, “I have heard that corn now grows where Troy town once stood; but I never thought they had grown any apricots there before.”

But stately compliment and noble entertainment could not disguise from the king that his affairs were in a parlous condition. The Marquis of Worcester had already advanced him large sums of money, yet his needs were as pressing as ever. When the chaplain came to the marquis as the “messenger of bad news—the King wants

money " — his lord interrupted him with the dry comment: " Hold, sir, that's no news; go on with your business." All the return Charles was ever able to make to his generous host was to promise him the Garter and assure him that as soon as his troubles were over he would create him a duke. Ere the unhappy king left Raglan for the last time he was crushed by the news of the surrender of Bristol; after such a blow to his hopes of receiving aid from the west country he realized that he must seek some other refuge. So, on a mid-September day, the royal guest took his departure, remarking to his host that he wished to relieve him of a great burden.

Yet the relief to the marquis was not so great after all. Although he was approaching his four-score years, and notwithstanding the vast sums of money he had expended in fitting out a little army for the royalist cause, he had been at infinite pains to prepare his castle for a siege before the king's arrival. And he must have anticipated that the fact of his having given shelter to the king would increase his danger of attack from the forces of the Parliament. Indeed he had not to wait long before reaping the reward of his hospitality, for soon after Charles had left Raglan the Parliament seized the rents of Worcester's London property and gave orders for the sale of his lands and houses in the capital as a punishment for his " treasons and offences." He knew, too, that the next attention



THE ENTRANCE TO THE STATE APARTMENTS, RAGLAN CASTLE.

would take the form of an attack on his castle of Raglan.

Several years earlier, indeed, he had received a convincing proof that he was held to be a suspected person by the Puritans of his neighbourhood, for a body of them came one day to search the castle for arms. The marquis himself received his uninited visitors and led them on a tour through the building, secretly instructing one of his servants of a plan he had devised for their discomfiture. For it should be remembered that the eldest son of the marquis was that Edward Herbert who distinguished himself by so many curious inventions, one of which he had set up inside the Tower of Gwent, which was part of the castle buildings. This particular contrivance consisted of an engine and numerous water-wheels, which, when set a-going, made huge cataracts inside the tower and created a prodigious roaring noise. When the marquis had led his inquisitive visitors to the bridge near this tower he gave the signal for the engine to be started, and as soon as the bellowing sound was heard another servant dashed forward exclaiming, "Look to yourselves, my masters, for the lions are got loose!" The valiant Puritans needed no second warning; in a flash they scurried out of the castle and never looked back till the building was out of sight.

All through the winter following the departure of

Charles various efforts were made by the Roundheads to annoy the lord of Raglan Castle, but it was not until the spring of 1646 that the place was really invested. At first, however, the siege was maintained in a lukewarm fashion, no serious attempt on the fortress being made until the month of June. In anticipation of the coming struggle the besieged had destroyed every structure near the castle that might afford shelter to the enemy, levelling even the tower of the village church lest it should be used for the mounting of cannon. As the garrison consisted of some eight hundred men, occasional sallies were made, several of which resulted in the slaughter or capture of some of the Parliamentary soldiers. At last, towards the end of June, the Roundhead commander, Colonel Morgan, sent a stern summons to the aged marquis, informing him that as Sir Thomas Fairfax had "finished his work over the kingdom except this castle" he had dispatched some of his forces to assist the besiegers in effecting its reduction. If the marquis did not surrender he was to expect nothing save the ruin of himself, his family, and that "poor distressed country." He might "haply find mercy" by agreeing to deliver the building at once.

To this the venerable peer answered that he made choice "rather to die nobly than to live with infamy;" and to a second summons he rejoined that he served a "Master that is of more might than all

the armies in the world." A few days later Sir Thomas Fairfax himself arrived upon the scene, with such a strength as, he affirmed, would be sufficient, with the "good hand of Providence," to reduce the garrison of Raglan to the obedience of the Parliament. Several letters passed between the general and the marquis, each excessively polite in its terms, the marquis pleading that Raglan was the only house he had to "cover his head in," and the soldier replying that if he had not formed it into a "garrison" he would not have troubled its owner for its surrender. But, as the store of provisions in the castle was fast disappearing, and as there was no hope of a royalist force coming to raise the siege, all those polite notes could have but one ending. It came on a day in August, the treaty of surrender agreeing that all the officers and soldiers were to be allowed to march out with the honours of war, then deliver up their arms and be set at liberty. The marquis had to be content to submit himself to the mercy of the Parliament.

What form that mercy took for the aged and infirm peer has already been seen; towards the castle itself the Parliament manifested its sentiment by ordering it to be "forthwith pulled down and demolished." The materials, too, were to be sold "for the best advantage of the state" after the charges for the destruction had been duly deducted. Here, then, in this lovely ruin, may be seen an in-

dubitable example of the iconoclasm of the Puritan spirit. No doubt many a devastation of city minster or village church or lordly castle is wrongfully charged to the account of Cromwell and his Ironsides, but the proofs of guilt in the case of Raglan are too strong to admit of any verdict save one. Yet, so honestly had the old builders reared these walls, much of its solid masonry defied all the assaults of Puritan pick-axes and battering-rams. Enough was demolished to destroy the value of the building as the last outpost of the civil war, and never more would its walls afford a shelter for the fugitive king; but sufficient remains to ensure for many a generation the proud supremacy of Raglan Castle as the most picturesque ruin in all England.

III
NORTHERN ENGLAND

CHAPTER I

A - HUNTING WITH KING JAMES

HOGHTON TOWER

WHEN Mary Stuart gave birth to the heir to her crown she presented the infant to her husband, Lord Darnley, with the remark that he was "so much" his son that she feared it would be "the worse for him hereafter." What did she mean? Was it that she expected the child would prove as vain, as weak-minded, as ambitious but as ill-qualified for rule as his father? Or was that strange saying merely her protest against the insinuation that David Rizzio and not Darnley was the father of the child?

Remembering the traditional beauty of Mary Stuart and the handsome physique of Darnley — his wife thought him "the best proportioned long man" she knew — and remembering also that Rizzio was credited with being uncomely and misshapen, much might be urged in excuse for those Scots who were free with the taunt that Mary's heir was "the son of Senior Davie." Take him for all in all, whether regard be had to his bodily form or his manners or his mental equipment, James Stuart was certainly the most un-royal person who ever occupied the English throne. If destiny had

cast him for the rôle of a second-rate university professor or fitted him with the part of a master of the hounds, he would have gone through life with a certain amount of credit; that he was ordained to be a king was one of those freaks of Providence for which there is no accounting.

One who, by reason of his service at court, had good opportunity of studying his original, Sir Anthony Weldon, has left on record a vivid portrait of the first Stuart king of England, the truth of which is accepted by a Scottish historian. Here, then, is the picture of James Stuart as he was seen by a contemporary: "He was of middle stature, more corpulent through his clothes than in his body, yet fat enough; his clothes ever being made large and easy, the doublets quilted for stiletto-proof; his breeches in great plaits, and full stuffed. He was naturally of a timid disposition, which was the greatest reason of his quilted doublets. His eyes large, ever rolling after any stranger came in his presence, inasmuch as many for shame have left the room, being out of countenance. His beard very thin; his tongue too large for his mouth, which ever made him speak full in the mouth, and made him drink very uncomely, as if eating his drink, which came out into the cup on each side of his mouth. His skin was soft as taffeta sarcenet, which felt so because he never washed his hands — only rubbed his finger-ends slightly with the wet end of

a napkin. His legs were very weak, having had, as was thought, some foul play in his youth, or rather before he was born, that he was not able to stand at seven years of age — that weakness made him ever leaning on other men's shoulders. His walk was ever circular, his fingers ever in that walk fiddling about his codpiece. . . . In his diet, apparel, and journeys he was very constant. In his apparel so constant, as by his goodwill he would never change his clothes till almost worn out to rags — his fashion never. . . . He was very liberal of what he had not in his own grip, and would rather part with a hundred pounds he never had in his keeping, than one twenty-shilling piece within his own custody." To all this one of James's own countrymen has added that he was "fussy and pompous," guilty of "mendacity and deception," had a "diseased curiosity about the things that right-tempered minds only approach at the bidding of necessity and duty," and was altogether a "grotesque" figure.

Such was the monarch which Scotland supplied to take the place of the queenly Elizabeth! The impression he made on those of his English subjects who were under no obligation to flattery may be inferred from this vignette: "I shall leave him dressed for posterity in the colours I saw him in the next progress after his inauguration; which was as green as the grass he trod on; with a feather in his cap, and a horn instead of a sword by his side.

How suitable to his age, calling, or person, I leave others to judge.”

Yet that green raiment and feather and horn were characteristic of the man. For his first pleasure in life, the one to which everything else was secondary, was that of the chase. This was quickly discovered by an Italian who made a casual visit to England some six years after James succeeded to the throne; he reported that hunting was the king's chief exercise, in which he consumed the principal part of his time. His second taste was for books, leading the Italian to describe his mode of life as more that of a theologian than a prince, a hunter than a king. This witness also noted that James had no kind of grace or royal dignity.

Judging from that story of his childhood which tells how he had a violent quarrel with a playmate for the possession of a sparrow, it would seem as though Mary Stuart's son was dominated by a sporting instinct from his birth. The history of his life in his native land has numerous references to his growing passion for all kinds of hunting, and when he had the rare fortune to succeed to the English throne the prospect of being able to indulge in hunting and hawking under far more favourable conditions than Scotland could afford gave him unmeasured delight. Such, indeed, was his devotion to sport, and so sadly lacking was he in the graces of conduct, that, notwithstanding the recent death

of Elizabeth, he could not refrain from his favourite pastime even on his journey to assume the dead queen's crown. That Elizabeth's body was still awaiting burial was no deterrent to her ill-mannered successor.

Only one man had the courage to protest that James wasted too much time in following the chase. Nearly two years after his arrival in England the Archbishop of York had occasion to write to Lord Cranborne, the secretary of state, and in the course of his epistle he ventured to express his wish for "more moderation in the lawful exercise of hunting, both that poor men's corn may be less spoiled, and other his Majesty's subjects more spared." When that passage was read to James his face clouded in anger and he declared it was "the foolishhest" remark he had ever heard. But, of course, he approved of my Lord Cranborne's reply in which that courtier reminded the archbishop that it was a praise in the good Emperor Trajan to be disposed to such manlike and active recreations, and added that it ought to be a joy to them to be able to behold their king "of so able a constitution."

Another rebuke was administered in an anonymous fashion. One day at Royston, where James built his chief hunting-seat, the king's favourite hound named Jowler was missing, much to his master's displeasure. The following day, however, the dog re-appeared, with a piece of paper tied

round his neck on which was written: "Good master Jowler, we pray you speak to the king (for he hears you every day, and so he doth not us) that it will please his majesty to go back to London; for else the country will be all undone; all our provision is spent, and we are not able to entertain him longer." It was taken as a jest, adds the narrator of the story; the royal huntsman had no intention of returning to his capital for another fortnight. He used to assure his council that hunting was the only means "to maintain his health," and charged them not to interrupt him too much with business. When some Puritans presented him with a petition on one of his outings he roughly sent them about their business. On another occasion he was so annoyed with the press of company that came to see him at his sport that he rode home "and played at cards."

Perhaps he was conscious that he was no more a regal figure on horseback than on a throne. It was said of him, indeed, that he had such a fashion of riding that it could not so properly be said he rode as that his horse carried him. Hence the natural disappointment of that countryman who figures in this anecdote. "I will write you news about the court at Rufford, where the loss of a stag, and the hounds hunting foxes instead of deer, put the king your master into a marvellous chafe, accompanied with those symptoms better known to



HOUGHTON TOWER.

you courtiers, I conceive, than to us country swains; in the height whereof comes a clown galloping in, and staring full in his face; ‘ ’Sblood,’ quoth he, ‘ am I come forty miles to see a fellow? ’ and presently in a great rage turns about his horse, and away he goes faster than he came.” For once James had the good sense to be amused at the effect which had resulted from one of his tantrums.

In view of all these stories it may be imagined that the surest way to his favour was to provide him with a good day’s hunting or present him with dogs or horses. This explains the unroyal strain of his letter to the Duke of Buckingham, otherwise his “ Steenie ” or “ Tom Badger ” or “ Slave and dog,” in which he poured “ blessing, blessing, blessing ” on his “ sweet Tom Badger’s heart-roots ” for breeding him “ so fine a kennel of young hounds ” and providing him with such steeds that he never before had been master of such hounds and horses.

Whether Sir Richard Hoghton, the master of Hoghton Tower, was particularly anxious to curry favour with James does not appear; the fact that the owner of that beautiful Lancashire mansion also possessed one of the finest and best-stocked parks in England was sufficient to account for the king’s memorable visit there in the late summer of 1617. So long ago as the time of Edward III the Hoghton family had been granted a license to enclose five

hundred of their acres as a deer-park, an unusual privilege for a mere subject, and during the intervening years the park had been so well tended that it is not surprising James was anxious to pay it a visit. The house of Hoghton Tower, which has been restored in modern times and is now a charming example of a seventeenth-century home of a wealthy country gentleman, was begun in 1565 and was sufficiently spacious to accommodate the royal hunting-party. Memories of that occasion are perpetuated to this day in the names of King James's stable, the King's staircase, etc., which are yet in common use in the house.

Having received due notice of the favour that was to be conferred upon him, Sir Richard Hoghton exerted himself to the utmost to entertain his royal guest worthily. So popular was he with his neighbours that they agreed to become his servants for the nonce, cheerfully consenting to don the coats of livery which the master of Hoghton Tower provided for the occasion. Those nobles and knights, too, arranged all kinds of entertainments, masques and dances and pantomimes, with which to regale the king after each day's hunting. The supply of provisions was so abundant that there were thirty dishes at breakfast, fifty-five at dinner, and forty-seven at supper. It was at one of those dinners that James is said to have perpetrated the jest of calling for a sword and knighting a massive joint of beef



THE COURTYARD, HOUGHTON TOWER.

as "Sir Loin," a legend, however, which is ruined by the fact that the word "sirloin" was in use before the advent of Mary Stuart's son.

A quaint old diary, written by one Nicholas Assheton who took part in the proceedings, gives us many glimpses of that visit to Houghton Tower. The record is not complimentary to James's prowess as a marksman, for it tells how he shot at a stag and missed, and how his second attempt did no more than break the animal's thigh-bone, necessitating the intervention of another huntsman to fire the fatal shot. The diary tells us how now it was "verie hot," how the king went down an alum mine, how the party was "late in to supper," how the royal guest was served with "briskett, wyne, and jellie," how a bishop preached before the king on Sunday, how the gentlemen danced and performed masques in "the middle room in the garden," and how there was "a rush bearing and piperling" in the middle court.

One incident of that hunting-party was to have momentous consequences for James and his successor. The prelate who preached before the king was Thomas Morton, Bishop of Chester, on whose advice James signed at Houghton Tower his famous Book of Sports. There was a conflict going on in Lancashire on the subject of Sunday amusements, the Puritans opposing all kinds of recreation on that day, and the Catholics declaring that dancing,

archery, and many games were harmless and allowable. James opposed the Puritan view, and forthwith gave orders that all the clergy were to read from the pulpit his catalogue of such sports as might be indulged in on Sundays after divine service. So firm was the opposition, however, that he had to withdraw his edict. That lesson was lost upon his son Charles, who, led by Laud, commanded the republication of his father's proclamation, the result being that many Puritan ministers who refused to obey were ejected from their livings. Hence one of the causes of the civil war of the seventeenth century had its origin in James's hunting visit to Hoghton Tower.

CHAPTER II

THE HOME OF JOHN OF GAUNT

LANCASTER CASTLE

SON of a king, father of a king by whom he was the progenitor of two more sovereigns of England, and by his daughters the ancestor of the Tudors and many lines of foreign monarchs, John of Gaunt's career was so crowded with warlike exploits and political intrigues that it is difficult to think of "home" in connection with his name. Born in Ghent — hence, through mispronunciation, the "Gaunt" of his popular title — he began soldiering in his fifteenth year, was fighting in Scotland before he was sixteen, was married in his nineteenth year, and thenceforward was constantly dashing hither and thither in pursuit of military adventure. Now he was marching through France, anon he was under arms in Castile, sometimes as a commander in the army of his brother the Black Prince but oftener as his own captain-general. To read even the briefest summary of his life is to receive the impression of a man of such restless activity that to think of the Duke of Lancaster having a peaceful home becomes almost impossible.

But if we turn to the pages of Shakespeare we gain quite another idea of the fourth son of Edward III. There "old John of Gaunt, time-honour'd Lancaster" appears as a loyal subject of his nephew Richard II, peaceful in disposition, and a passionate patriot of the type most in love with the home-life of his native land. Notwithstanding his birth on foreign soil, his constant absence on military expeditions, and his claim to be king of Castile, it is on Lancaster's lips that Shakespeare places that glowing eulogy of England which none can appropriate who have not the tendrils of their affection closely entwined about some English home.

"This royal throne of kings, this scepter'd isle,
This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
This other Eden, demi-paradise,
This fortress built by Nature for herself
Against infection and the hand of war,
This happy breed of men, this little world,
This precious stone set in the silver sea,
Which serves it in the office of a wall
Or as a moat defensive to a house,
Against the envy of less happier lands,
This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England,
This nurse, this teeming womb of royal kings,
Fear'd by their breed and famous by their birth,
Renowned for their deeds as far from home,
For Christian service and true chivalry,
As is the sepulchre in stubborn Jewry
Of the world's ransom, blessed Mary's son,
This land of such dear souls, this dear, dear land
Dear for her reputation through the world,
Is now leased out, I die pronouncing it,
Like to a tenement or pelting farm."

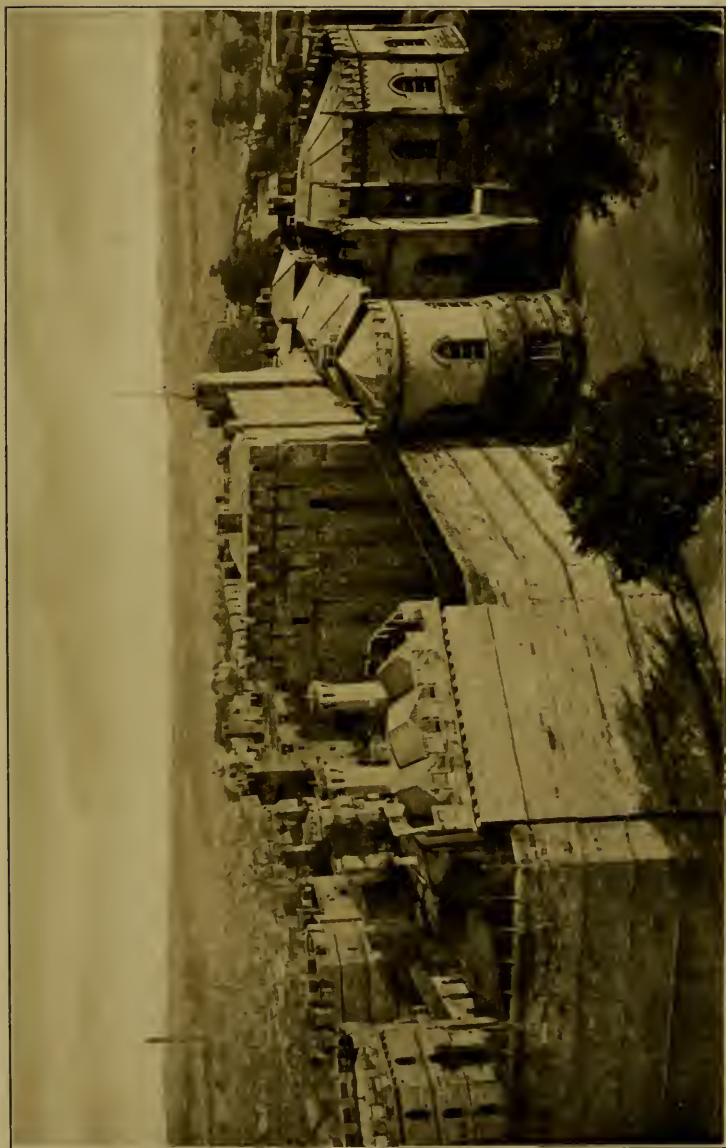
As it was to his second marriage that John of Gaunt owed his claim to be king of Castile, so it was by his first wife that he became heir to the title of Duke of Lancaster. His third marriage, to his concubine, Catherine Swynford, enriched him with a considerable family of natural daughters to be legitimated when he had legalized his connection with that lady. It is sometimes asserted that Lancaster had more affection for Catherine than for either of his other wives, but it is impossible to believe he was lacking in love for that gentle and beautiful Blanche of Lancaster for whom Chaucer wrote his elegiac poem entitled "The Book of the Duchess." In line after line the poet draws such an entrancing picture of her loveliness of form and feature and her graces of mind and spirit that it is incredible to think her husband indifferent to her charms. As the sun exceeded all stars and planets in beauty, so did she excel all others of her sex; she danced and sang and spoke so sweetly, laughed so merrily, was so like to a bright torch whence others might take light, that the poet knew not how to praise her aright.

Such qualities must have won the affection of John of Gaunt; besides, as hinted above, he owed to that fair and gentle wife a great accession of his worldly fortune. For Blanche of Lancaster was the second daughter and co-heir of Henry, Duke of Lancaster, and as she survived her only sister she

brought to her husband not merely his title but also many great estates, including the Savoy palace of London and the stately castle of the town from whence her father derived his ducal title. When in London John of Gaunt's chief residence was that Savoy mansion he had inherited from his father-in-law, which, however, was burnt and destroyed by Wat Tyler in his insurrection of 1381; of his many strongholds in other parts of England the favourite was that Lancaster Castle where his first wife had spent her girlhood.

So meagre are our domestic records of the fourteenth century that it is impossible to give any details of the home-life of John of Gaunt; some of his accounts have survived, it is true, but if his family life in Lancaster Castle employed the pen of any chronicler his labours were in vain. Surely, however, it may be taken as a proof of his affection for the building that legend credits him with many additions to the structure, including at least some part of the noble gate-tower and that turret known as John of Gaunt's chair. But whatever the extent of his alterations and enlargements of his wife's ancestral home, the fact that this was "Gaunt's embattled pile" must always take high rank among the most interesting associations of Lancaster Castle.

Besides, this fortress and the domains belonging thereto were the occasion of John of Gaunt's son



LANCASTER CASTLE.

wresting the English crown from Richard II. Readers of Shakespeare will be familiar with the climax of the death-bed scene between the king and "time-honour'd Lancaster;" they will recall that as soon as Richard was informed that his uncle's life was spent he declared his intention of seizing all his possessions. That he had promised Lancaster's son Henry, when he had commanded him into exile, that his absence from England should not affect his rights to his father's property, counted for nothing; he was resolved to confiscate all "his plate, his goods, his money and his lands." Nor would he heed the warning of the Duke of York that by such treachery he would forfeit the allegiance of thousands of his subjects. The sequel is written at large in the pages of history. Enraged at such dastardly conduct, Henry returned to England, quickly rallied the nation to his standard, and, in a few months had driven his cousin from the throne.

Although Camden praised Lancaster Castle as "fair built and strong" he also added that it was "not very ancient." Such a qualification proved the limitations of the antiquary's knowledge. Modern research has shown that the building occupies the site of a Roman *castrum* and identified the foundations of a Saxon structure. That the world conquerors had a settlement here is proved not only by the discovery in various parts of the town of

numerous urns, coins, and fragments of Roman pottery, but also by the fact that when some excavations were being carried out within the castle area there was brought to light a small but almost perfect votive altar bearing the inscription: "To the holy God Mars Cocidius Vibinius Lucius, a pensioner of the Consul, willingly fulfils his vow to a deserving object." Tradition used to ascribe the erection of the western tower to Adrian and another to the father of Constantine the Great, and even if those pedigrees are dismissed as myths there still remain sufficient reasons for disregarding Camden's verdict against the antiquity of the building.

Immediately opposite the visitor as he enters the chief gateway, in the further corner of the courtyard, is a building which takes him back to the last decade of the eleventh century. At the battle of Hastings the right wing of Norman William's army was led by one Roger de Montgomery, who fought so valiantly on that memorable day that the Conqueror willingly acceded to Roger's request, that the earldom of Lancaster should be bestowed upon his son Roger the Poitevin. Not long after he entered upon the possession of his Lancashire estate Roger of Poitou set to work building a castle on the hill above the River Lune, and the stability of his workmanship was such that his keep, sometimes called the Lungess Tower, has survived unimpaired

to this day. During the succeeding century or more the castle changed owners several times, passing at length into the possession of King John, who is credited with having held his court here in 1206 and receiving within its walls an embassy from France. From that date the castle has been nearly always royal property, just as the title of the Duke of Lancaster has been reserved for the occupant of the throne.

Owing to its proximity to the Scottish border, the fortress has frequently had to bear the brunt of attacks from Scottish invaders, especially during the fourteenth century. Thus after the battle of Bannockburn the Scots burned the town and partially destroyed the castle, while in 1322 Robert Bruce and his men "came to Lancaster, which town they also burnt, save only a priory of black monks, and a house of preaching friars." Later still, when the Wars of the Roses devastated England, the home of John of Gaunt played a conspicuous part in the deadly rivalry between Yorkists and Lancastrians. That Edward IV was not forgetful of those who had fought under his banner is pertinently illustrated by an old record which tells how the office of carpenter of the castle was bestowed upon one James Calbert in consideration of the fact that at one battle he had lost his right hand and had his other hand so maimed "that he may neither clothe nor feed himself." One story, indeed, avers

that Edward himself was once obliged to seek a refuge here.

Notwithstanding the importance of the stronghold, owing to its command of the northwest coast and its usefulness as a defence against raids from Scotland, through some unexplained cause it had been sadly neglected during the earlier period of Elizabeth's reign. At length, however, the queen's attention was called to the value of the building as "a great strength to the country, and succour to the Queen's Justices," and orders were given for its complete restoration. A tablet on the battlements inscribed "E. R. 1585" gives the date when the work was finished and perpetuates Elizabeth's only connection with the home of her ancestor.

That reference to the "Queen's Justices" is a reminder that from the sixteenth century the chief use to which the castle was put was that of a prison, a service which is continued to this day, for John of Gaunt's home is now utilized for the county prison and assize courts. Judging from the old records, most of those who made the acquaintance of Lancaster Castle as a prison did so as heretics. An abbot and many monks and Catholic priests were confined here during the troubles which followed upon the Suppression of the Monasteries, while in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries many alleged witches were immured within its walls. Two of the most distinguished



THE GATEHOUSE, LANCASTER CASTLE.

religious prisoners of the castle, however, were Henry Burton and George Fox. The former, who was a particularly pugnacious Puritan, was sent hither from London after his ears had been shaved off, and confined in "a vast desolate room" beneath which were imprisoned five witches who kept up "a hellish noise" night and day. That apartment — which was probably the Dungeon Tower demolished in 1812 — seems to have been selected for the prison of the founder of the Society of Friends, for his description of the room corresponds closely with that given by Burton. "I was put into a tower," Fox wrote, "where the smoke of the other prisoners came up so thick that it stood as dew upon the walls, and sometimes it was so thick I could hardly see the candle when it burned; besides it rained in upon my bed, and many times, when I went out to stop the rain in the winter season, my shirt was wet through with the rain that came in upon me; in this manner did I lie all that long winter." He did not suffer in vain, for his personal experience of that loathsome dungeon stood him in good stead when he began his crusade against the hideous condition of the gaols of England. Hence when John Howard visited Lancaster Castle in 1774 so many improvements had been made that he was able to make a favourable report of that particular prison.

Between the incarceration of Henry Burton and George Fox the home of John of Gaunt had received

its last baptism of fire. At the outbreak of the civil war between Charles I and the Parliament the castle was in the hands of the royalists, who confined there " many honest men who would not comply to do what they thought." But the tables were soon turned on the king's supporters, and despite several fluctuations of fortune the fortress remained in the possession of the rebels. Considerable damage was done to the structure, much of the lead being stripped from its roof to replace that which had been torn from one of the churches to supply material for bullets for Cromwell's army; hence at the restoration it became necessary to expend nearly two thousand pounds upon its renovation. Even modern days have added one more royal association to the annals of the castle, for the inscription of " V. R. 1851 " on the doorway to the turret known as John of Gaunt's chair recalls the fact of Queen Victoria's visit to the home of her illustrious ancestor.

CHAPTER III

RICHARD III IN Milder MOOD

MIDDLEHAM CASTLE

RICHARD III is the ogre of the royal line of England. Historians and poets alike have painted him in the blackest colours. It is true that in modern times he has received the attentions of that white-washing fraternity which may be expected to prove that Henry VIII was the virtuous husband of one wife; but the great volume of testimony in poetry and prose condemns him without reserve.

Perhaps the severest indictment of the usurper is that written by Shakespeare, for the chief figure of "The Tragedy of Richard the Third" is depicted not merely as an objective but as a subjective monster. The keynote of the impeachment is struck in Richard's opening speech, a soliloquy in which he makes self-confession of his base character. He admits that he was "rudely stamp'd," that he was "deform'd," and that he had been sent into the world so "unfinish'd," so "half made up" that dogs barked at him as he passed them in the street. Since, then, he could not prove a lover, he was "determined to prove a villain," and announced his resolve to be "subtle, false and treacherous."

In the spirit of that self-condemnation the trag-

edy moves on to its climax, wading its way through blood to the inevitable catastrophe. Hence the reader is prepared for that harrowing procession of ghosts which disturbs Richard's sleep the night before his fatal battle. Those shades of the murdered dead — Prince Edward, Henry VI, Clarence, Rivers and Grey, Hastings, the two Princes, the Lady Anne, and Buckingham — suggest that the poet accepted without question the assertions of those chroniclers who laid upon Richard's shoulders the responsibility of all those violent or mysterious deaths. Whatever Shakespeare's private thoughts of Richard may have been, his dramatic picture of that "bloody wretch" is wholly unrelieved.

Nor is the portrait drawn by the historians much more attractive. Hume gives an unfaltering narrative of the tyranny by which Richard seized upon his nephew's inheritance, declares that his death in battle was too mild and honourable a fate for his "multiplied and detestable enormities," and affirms that "his body was in every particular no less deformed than his mind." Lingard thought him "little better than a monster in human shape;" but the writer who exceeded even Shakespeare in his whole-hearted denunciation was that Sir Richard Baker whose "Chronicle of the Kings of England" was so popular in the seventeenth century. He accepted every story told to his discredit and combined them all into this terrific indictment:

“There never was in any man a greater uniformity of body and mind than was in him, both of them equally deformed. Of body he was but low, crook-back'd, hook-shouldered, splay-footed, goggle-eyed, his face little and round, his complexion swarthy, his left arm from his birth dry and withered: born a monster in nature, with all his teeth, with hair on his head, and nails on his fingers and toes. And just such were the qualities of his mind. One quality he had in ordinary, which was, to look fawningly when he plotted, sternly when he executed. Those vices, which in other men are passions, in him were habits: and his cruelty was not upon occasion, but natural. If at any time he showed any virtue, it was but pretence; the truth of his mind was only lying and falsehood. He was full of courage, and yet not valiant; valour consisting not only in doing, but as well in suffering, which he could not abide. He was politic, and yet not wise. And it was not so much ambition that made him desire the crown, as cruelty; that it might be in his power to kill at his pleasure. And, to say the truth, he was scarce of the number of men who consist of flesh and blood, being nothing but blood. One miracle we may say he did; which was, that he made the truth of history to exceed the fiction of poetry, being a greater Harpy than those that were feigned. He would fain have been accounted a good king, but for his life he could not be a good man; and it is

an impossible thing to be one without the other. He left no issue behind him: and it had been pity he should, at least in his own image. One such Monster was enough for many ages.”

More recent historians have tempered mercy with judgment, while some, as hinted above, have attempted the herculean task of depicting Richard III as a normal man and a good king. The well-intentioned efforts of the latter may be ignored; the verdicts of the former are significant by reason of the fact that they do not exculpate the king from the chief crimes laid to his charge. That he forced Anne of Warwick to marry him seems beyond doubt; the evidence that he murdered Prince Edward and then his father remains practically unshaken; that he was at least indirectly responsible for his brother Clarence's death is generally admitted; that he seized the person of his nephew and had him and his brother confined in the Tower of London cannot be denied.

Neither is it possible to question that Richard was responsible for those plots which enabled him to assume the crown. One of the chief obstacles to the realization of his ambition was the loyalty of Lord Hastings, a noble whom he had vainly attempted to win to his side. Hence the ingenious plot which had its culmination in a dramatic scene in the Tower of London. At a council held there Richard declared that Jane Shore had attempted

his life by witchcraft, and asked what was to be done with such offenders. And when Hastings answered that "if" they had been guilty of such conduct they deserved severe punishment, Richard burst out, "Dost thou serve me with ifs and ands? I tell thee they have done it, and that I will make good on thy body, traitor!" With that he smote upon the table, the signal for the entrance of those armed men who had been appointed to drag Hastings out of the chamber to immediate execution.

But the catalogue of the usurper's crimes is too copious for detailed examination. That he must be charged with the murder of Rivers and Grey, and his two nephews is beyond reasonable doubt; if he did not procure the death of his wife that he might be free to wed his own niece it is not possible to acquit him of casting a slur upon his brother's children, while it seems highly probable that he did not hesitate to befoul his mother's name by suggesting that he was his father's only legitimate child.

If the apologists for Richard were wise they would confine themselves to that period of his life prior to his seizure of the throne, a period which shows the tyrant and usurper in a far milder mood. And many of the years of that period are closely associated with the Yorkshire castle of Middleham, that famous stronghold of the illustrious Neville family which is the most conspicuous object in the

beautiful valley of Wensleydale. In fact there is no building in all England which revives so many memories of Richard III as this stately ruin.

When his eldest brother Edward was crowned king of England as Edward IV, he, the youngest son of the Duke of York, was in his ninth year, but not too young, in his brother's opinion, to share in the good fortune of his family. Hence, in addition to being created Duke of Gloucester, he was made admiral of England and presented with the manor of Richmond in Yorkshire. In view, however, of his tender years, he was committed to the guardianship of the Earl of Warwick, the redoubtable "King-maker," whose chief abode was at Middleham Castle. Consequently it was in this lovely valley of Yorkshire that the young Duke of Gloucester spent some of his most impressionable years, learning here the art of war from the accomplished Warwick and accumulating that affection for the scene of his childhood which was to prompt him to a notable deed in after years. To those years, also, must be attributed that knowledge of Warwick's daughter Anne which made him aspire to her hand.

Whether, however, love was an element in that ambition is disputed. This was the situation: Warwick had two daughters, the elder of whom had been married to the Duke of Clarence. As there was no male heir, Clarence counted upon succeeding to all the possessions of his father-in-law, and



MIDDLEHAM CASTLE.

was excusably anxious that his wife's sister should not wed a powerful noble. All this accounts for his behaviour when he learned that his brother Richard was determined to make the Lady Anne his wife; so alarmed, indeed, was he that he adopted the extreme course of hiding his sister-in-law. But Gloucester was both a shrewder and more determined man than his brother; although Anne had been confined to a house in London and disguised as a servant, he soon discovered her whereabouts and removed her to a sanctuary. Then he pleaded his cause with his brother the king, who decided in his favour and gave him that portion of Warwick's property which included the manor and castle of Middleham.

Under the reign of the "King-maker" that stronghold had been so adorned that it took high rank among the most magnificent castles of the land. Within its walls Warwick kept almost royal state; as Bulwer Lytton wrote, "the most renowned statesmen, the mightiest Lords flocked to his hall: Middleham—not Windsor, nor Shene, nor Westminster, nor the Tower—seemed the Court of England." But by the time of Richard's marriage with Anne of Warwick the castle of Middleham had lost its lord, for at the battle of Barnet the "King-maker" had at last paid the price of ambition and fallen by the sword. Ignoring the claims of Warwick's widow, Middleham, as already

stated, was awarded to Richard partly as a reward for his services and partly as his wife's share of her father's estate. And so it happened that the Duke of Gloucester returned to the castle of his boyhood as its sole lord and owner.

Here, then, he established his home, and that he was greatly attached to the place seems obvious from the fact that all the time not occupied in discharging his various public duties was spent at Middleham. Hither he brought his wife, and it was within these walls his only legitimate son, Edward, was born in 1474. Three years subsequent to that event he entered upon an undertaking which his apologists cite as an example of his piety, but which may also be explained as another illustration of his ambition. The undertaking in question was the transformation of the parish church of Middleham into a collegiate church, a conversion which calls for a little explanation for the sake of those unversed in ecclesiastical terminology. Perhaps the simplest definition of a collegiate church is that it is a miniature cathedral; that is to say, its clerical staff consists of a chapter or college, with a dean, canons and other officials, and that it corresponds on a small scale to a bishopric minus a bishop. In the case of a royal collegiate church, that is, one attached to a royal palace, its clergy are exempt from any ecclesiastical jurisdiction save their own. They are, in short, a community and a law to themselves.

The object of this is obvious; such a church marks out the palace to which it is attached as distinguished above the residences of mere nobles.

Now, it would appear that the Duke of Gloucester was anxious to procure for his church at Middleham privileges and immunities rivalling those of his royal brother's chapel at Windsor and excelling those of any other ecclesiastical institution. This is admitted by the historian of Middleham Church, though he, it should be added, regarded Richard's ambition as a proof of his devotion to religion.

Whatever the motive, the records show that the lord of Middleham spared no pains in effecting his purpose. His first step was to secure the necessary license from his brother the king, which was soon forthcoming; his next to obtain the approval of the Archbishop of York, which also was immediately granted; the other assents had to be procured from the rector of the parish, the Archdeacon of Richmond, and the Pope, all of whom raised no objection. Hence on a January day of 1478 an assembly took place in the parish church of Middleham, under the shadow of the castle, the issue of which was that the church was there and then erected into a collegiate charge, with dean and canons all complete.

Among the documents connected with this transaction are several relating to the practical matter of the endowment of the church, by one of which the chaplains agreed to forego their rights in certain

tythes of hay, etc., in recompense for which the duke undertook to pay them annually a specified sum of money. Nor was that all. Gloucester also agreed for himself and heirs that the dean and chaplains were to be presented with two bucks and one doe from his parks yearly, and to be allowed the use of sufficient grass lands for the grazing of eight oxen and two horses. All this certainly presents Richard in a far pleasanter aspect than is depicted in those pages of history which tell how he usurped his nephew's throne.

Nearly all the days of the short life of his only legitimate son were spent at Middleham. That he was born here has already been noted; and here the lad remained when his father set out on that journey which culminated in his seizure of the throne. Among the Harleian manuscripts is preserved a document setting forth some of the household expenses of Middleham Castle at this time, from which we learn that the wages of Edward's nurse were a hundred shillings a year, that twenty-two shillings were expended in green cloth to make him a gown, that a feather for his wear cost five shillings, and that a shoemaker was paid thirteen shillings for his shoes. We are told, too, the name of his tutor, and how much was paid for his primer and psalter and the cost of covering both books in satin. And some of the entries relate to the expenses of the young prince when he was taken to London to attend his

parents' coronation. Soon after that event the youth returned to Middleham, where he died suddenly in the April of 1484, a judgment, as some thought, for his father's ruthless murder of his two nephews.

But, according to an old legend, Richard had another, a natural, son who was also born at Middleham, a son to whom he gave the name of Richard Plantagenet. John Timbs tells the story thus: "When Sir Thomas Moyle was building his house at Eastwell, in Kent, he observed his principal bricklayer, whenever he left off work, to retire with a book. This circumstance raised the curiosity of Sir Thomas to know what book the man was reading, and at length he found it was Latin. Upon entering into further conversation with his workman, Sir Thomas learnt from him that he had been tolerably educated by a schoolmaster with whom he boarded in his youth; and that he did not know who his parents were till he was fifteen or sixteen years old, when he was taken to Bosworth Field, and introduced to King Richard; that the King embraced him, and told him he was his son, and moreover promised to acknowledge him in case of the fortunate event of the battle; that after the battle was lost he hastened to London, and that he might have means to live by his honest labour, put himself apprentice to a bricklayer." To round off this story in the most romantic fashion, we are told that Sir

Thomas allowed the royal bricklayer to build himself a small house on his estate and spend the remainder of his life in comparative comfort.

Although for most visitors to this majestic ruin the chief interest is its connection with the less-guilty deeds of the last of the Yorkist kings, Middleham Castle can boast of other legends which carry the imagination back to feudal times. The great keep around which the more modern parts of the structure cluster was built by Robert Fitz Ralph in 1191, the daughter of whose grandson carried the property into the Neville family by marrying Robert de Neville of Raby. A dark story is told of that lord of Middleham, to the effect that being caught committing adultery with a married woman of Craven the enraged husband inflicted on him such injuries that he died almost immediately. It is sometimes asserted that Robert's own wife was the cause of her husband's punishment, but if so she repented sufficiently afterwards to found a chantry for the welfare of his soul. This Neville was the grandfather of that scion of his race who figures in history as "the Peacock of the North."

Another tradition affirms that Edward IV was once a prisoner in the castle he afterwards presented to his brother, the adoption of which by Shakespeare has given it a long lease of life. It seems, however, that there is no truth in that story. And modern investigation has also robbed Middle-

ham Castle of its association with the execution of Thomas the Bastard of Fauconberg, one of the many victims of the Wars of the Roses.

As was perhaps natural, after the death of Richard III on the battle-field of Bosworth, Middleham Castle sunk into obscurity. Even his collegiate church, though it would be naturally transferred to the crown, was completely neglected by Henry VII. The parish records of the seventeenth century record the death, in November, 1609, of "Sir Henrie Linley, that worthie knight of Middleham Castle," and it seems probable that the building continued to be occupied for another thirty years. But in 1646 the Parliamentary committee of York gave orders for the fortress to be made untenable lest it should be turned into a stronghold for the king, the result of which was that much of the building was destroyed by gunpowder, leaving it a prey to those elements of nature which have transformed it into its present condition.

CHAPTER IV

“ A BLOODY PRISON ”

PONTEFRACT CASTLE

DOUBTLESS the reader of the preceding pages will think it questionable whether any other castle, in comparison with several of those of which he has perused the history, can claim such a distinctive title as that at the head of this chapter, yet there are adequate reasons for accepting Shakespeare's description of Pontefract Castle as a “ bloody prison,” for the numerous crimes committed within its walls give it a bad pre-eminence in the annals of blood-stained strongholds.

Twice is the castle — named “ Pomfret ” because, being so pronounced, the word is often thus written — made the setting of a scene in Shakespeare's historical plays, once to introduce the imprisoned Richard II and again to foreshadow the fate of Rivers, Grey, and Vaughan, whom Richard III wished removed from his path. The apostrophe of Rivers is ominous of his own fate and that of his companions :

“ O Pomfret, Pomfret! O thou bloody prison,
Fatal and ominous to noble peers!
Within the guilty closure of thy walls
Richard the second here was hack'd to death;
And, for more slander to thy dismal seat,
We give thee up our guiltless blood to drink.”



PONTEFRACT CASTLE.

But the second Richard was not the first of royal lineage to whom Pontefract was a fatal prison. In the second decade of the fourteenth century the castle was the property of Thomas, Earl of Lancaster, the cousin of Edward II, he having obtained possession of the building through his marriage with the daughter and heir of its previous owner. Lancaster, notwithstanding his close connection with the king, was one of the most determined opponents of Edward's insane favouritism, and took a conspicuous part in the execution of Piers Gaveston. And when the infatuated monarch replaced his first favourite by the Despensers and persisted in his general misgovernment, his cousin became the natural leader of the disaffected barons. In reality he was a somewhat selfish second edition of Simon de Montfort, but as he was the figure-head of the discontent of his age he was accepted by the populace as a hero-patriot. For a time he was successful in his opposition to Edward, and in the late winter of 1322 he was once more in arms against his king. Soon, however, some of his followers deserted his camp, shortly after which he retired to Pontefract Castle to hold a council with those who remained faithful. The verdict of that council was in favour of a retreat further north, to which Lancaster only agreed on being threatened by one of his friends. Even that retreat did not save him from defeat and capture; the sudden appearance

of a royalist force led to the desertion of more of his followers, compelling him to an unconditional surrender.

In the meantime Edward II had taken possession of the earl's own castle of Pontefract, whither — such was the irony of his fate — Lancaster was conveyed a prisoner and immured in the Swillington Tower which he had himself built! This was a fearsome dungeon with massive walls and no entrance save through a trap-door in the floor of the turret above. Here the rightful lord of the castle was confined for several days ere being brought to trial in his own hall. Of course that trial was a mockery; with Edward for his judge and the Despencers and their friends as his jury, there could be but one result. At first Lancaster was sentenced to be hung, drawn, and quartered, but, in view of his royal blood, that doom was modified to death by beheading. In vain did the earl exclaim, “ Shall I die without answer? ” he was at once silenced by an old hood being thrown over his head, and was dragged from the hall to be mounted on miserable horse and so led to an adjacent hill and decapitated. Such, however, was the popular opinion of his character that the monks begged his body and gave it honourable burial in their priory. Edward must have regretted granting that request, for the tomb of his cousin became a place of pilgrimage to which thousands resorted with costly offerings. The

mound on which he was slain still bears the name of St. Thomas in his honour, while seven hundred years after his death a large stone coffin was unearthed in the parish which, because the skull of the skeleton was placed between the legs and the place of the head occupied by a large stone, was believed to contain the veritable remains of the first royal victim of Pontefract Castle.

Reference has already been made to the deposition of Richard II by John of Gaunt's son Henry. That event, it will be remembered, was speedily followed by Richard's formal renunciation of the crown, an act of self-effacement, however, which did not prevent Henry from imprisoning his rival. The early days of his confinement were divided between the Tower of London and Leeds Castle, but, for greater security against his being made the occasion of counter-plots, it was not long ere he was removed to the more remote stronghold of Pontefract.

Two poets, Shakespeare and Drayton, exercised their genius in imagining Richard's thoughts when he found himself immured in that Yorkshire fortress, the dramatist representing the deposed king as occupying himself with a comparison between his prison and the outer world. In the midst of his musing the strains of melody penetrate to his dungeon, effecting a change in the tenor of his thoughts:

" Music do I hear?

Ha, ha! keep time: how sour sweet music is,
 When time is broke and no proportion kept!
 So it is in the music of men's lives.
 And here have I the daintiness of ear
 To check time broke in a disorder'd string;
 But for the concord of my state and time
 Had not an ear to hear my true time broke.
 I wasted time, and now doth time waste me;
 For now hath time made me his numbering clock:
 My thoughts are minutes; and with sighs they jar
 Their watches on unto mine eyes, the outward watch,
 Whereto my finger, like a dial's point,
 Is pointing still, in cleansing them from tears.
 Now sir, the sound that tells what hour it is
 Are clamorous groans, which strike upon my heart,
 Which is the bell: so sighs and tears and groans
 Show minutes, times, and hours."

Whether, in that and other passages, Shakespeare attributed to Richard a higher poetic mentality than he possessed, must be left to the historians; Drayton, in the epistle which he imagined the king writing to his girlish queen from his prison at Pontefract, took a lower, and, doubtless, safer ground. Perhaps his object in the following lines was to create sympathy for Richard's misfortunes.

" When quiet sleep (the heavy heart's relief)
 Hath rested sorrow, somewhat less'ned grief,
 My passed greatness into mind I call,
 And think this while I dreamèd of my fall:
 With this conceit my sorrows I beguile,
 That my fair queen is but withdrawn a while,
 And my attendants in some chamber by,
 As in the height of my prosperity,

Calling aloud, and asking who is there?
 The echo answ'ring, tells me, ' Woe is there: '
 And when mine arms would gladly thee enfold,
 I clip the pillow, and the place is cold:
 Which when my waking eyes precisely view,
 'Tis a true token, that it is too true.
 As many minutes as in hours there be,
 So many hours each minute seems to me;
 Each hour a day, morn, noontide, and a set,
 Each day a year, with miseries complete;
 A winter, spring-time, summer, and a fall,
 All seasons varying, but unseason'd all:
 In endless woe my thread of life thus wears,
 In minutes, hours, days, months, to ling'ring years.
 They praise the summer that enjoy the South,
 Pomfret is closed in the North's cold mouth;
 There pleasant Summer dwelleth all the year,
 Frost-starved Winter doth inhabit here:
 A place wherein despair may fitly dwell,
 Sorrow best suiting with a cloudy cell."

By the nature of his poem Drayton was prevented from introducing a description of Richard's tragic end, but Shakespeare, using the dramatic form, had ample license to handle that theme. And it will be recalled that he utilized the legend which made Sir Pierce of Exton resolve to murder Richard because he overheard the new king lament that he had no friend to remove his " living fear." Hence the speedy journey of Exton and his servants to Pontefract, the scuffle in Richard's prison, and the swift death of the deposed king from a blow with Exton's sword.

But that is not the only version of the manner of Richard's death. According to one chronicler he

put an end to his life by "voluntary abstinence;" another assures us that he began to starve himself to death, then relented, but on trying to eat found himself unable to do so by the closing of the orifice of his stomach; while a third authority declares that he was wilfully starved by his keepers. Most of these theories agree in giving the date of his death as the fourteenth of February of 1399. All that the cautious modern historian will commit himself to is that "if" Richard was murdered the probabilities are in favour of his deliberate starvation by his gaolers.

Froissart has given us a vivid picture of Richard's funeral procession from Pontefract to London, describing how his body was laid in a litter and "set in a chair covered with black," how four horses in black drew the litter, and how the cortege included two men in black to lead the car and four knights in black as followers. He tells us also that the body was exposed in London with its "visage open" and viewed by more than twenty thousand people.

All this seems circumstantial enough, yet for many years afterwards there were not a few who believed that Richard was still alive! The story was that he had escaped from Pontefract, made his way to the remote isles of Scotland, was there recognized and sent to the court of the Scottish king, by whom he was kept in honourable captivity until his death

some eighteen years later. In modern days this theory has won the adherence of a sober and conscientious historian, who has cited many startling documents in support of his faith. Doubtless the problem will never be solved, and pending that event the majority will accept one or other of those versions of Richard's death which have added “ slander ” to the “ dismal seat ” of Pontefract.

Whatever may have been the fate of the deposed king, no comfortable doubt is possible in the cases of many others who made the acquaintance of this “ bloody prison.” Notwithstanding the help he gave Henry IV in thrusting Richard from the throne, Richard le Scrope, Archbishop of York, for showing his sympathy with a revolt against the king's spoliation of the church, found that not even his ecclesiastical position could protect him from the fate of those regarded as traitors. By the deception of one of Henry's supporters he was induced to disband the little army which had made him its leader, and was then hurried off to Pontefract. Shortly after the king himself arrived at the castle, but when Scrope begged an interview not only was that refused but the archbishop's crozier was torn from his hands and orders given for his trial, which ended in his condemnation and execution.

Again, shortly after the battle of Wakefield, Richard Neville, father of Warwick the “ King-maker,” was conveyed to the castle and there be-

headed despite the fact that he was seriously wounded. With him, too, many other Yorkists were butchered in cold blood.

But the crime which is the greatest "slander" on the history of this northern fortress is that in which the victims were Earl Rivers, Lord Richard Grey, Sir Thomas Vaughan, and Sir Richard Hawte, all of whom were put to death in 1483 at the instigation of Richard III. Their sole offence was that they might have supported the claims of Edward V to his father's throne, a reasonable deduction, no doubt, in view of the fact that Rivers was the young king's uncle and Grey his half-brother. Many as were the victims of the ruthless Richard, it is agreed that Rivers was the noblest and most accomplished of them all. The friend and patron of Caxton, for whose printing-press he translated several moral books from the French, Rivers seems to have accepted his fate with the calm resignation of a man who had long meditated on the transitory nature of human glory, occupying his last hours in the penning of that poignant lament which begins,

" Sumwhat musying,
And more mornyng; "

and when his dead body was stripped he was found to be wearing next his skin one of those hair shirts affected as a penance by the contrite spirits of mediæval times. Caxton had written prophetically

of his friend and patron when, in an epilogue to one of his translations, he had said of Rivers that “ it seemeth that he conceiveth well the mutability and the instability of this present life.”

Like Edward IV, the murderer of Rivers was no stranger to Pontefract Castle, it having been his official residence in 1472 when, while Duke of Gloucester, he was responsible for the maintenance of order in the north. Hither, too, he came in the June of 1484, for there is in existence a treaty of peace which was signed here as between Richard III and the Duc de Bretagne. And subsequent royal visitors to “ bloody Pomfret ” included Henry VII, Henry VIII, James I, and Charles I.

Two dramatic events in its more modern history have yet to be recorded, one belonging to the sixteenth and the other to the seventeenth century. The first was connected with that Pilgrimage of Grace which had its origin in the suppression of the lesser monasteries, an attempt at reformation which was specially objectionable to the Yorkshire people with whom the monks were exceedingly popular. As the attack on the religious houses was accompanied by new laws against the sacrament and statutes abolishing many of the holidays to which country folk had been accustomed for generations, the revolt soon became a serious affair, for in a short time some twenty thousand of the commons had gathered round Robert Aske as their leader.

It was at the head of this army that Aske marched upon Pontefract, whither Lord Darcy and the Archbishop of York had fled for refuge. There was no need, however, to attack the building; both Lord Darcy and the archbishop had a certain amount of sympathy with the rebels; at any rate, whether through fear or sympathy, they soon admitted Aske to the castle and swore fidelity to the cause he represented.

When it became known that Aske and his men were in possession of Pontefract the king's representative in the north at once drafted a proclamation and dispatched a Thomas Milner, Lancaster Herald, to read it at the market cross of the town. It was an adventurous undertaking for Milner, but he went bravely forward with his task. And at first he must have had good hopes of success. "When I did approach near the town of Pomfret," he wrote in his report, "I overtook certain companies of the said rebellious, being common people of the husbandry, which saluted me gently, and gave great honour to the King's coat of arms which I wore. And I demanded of them why they were in harness, and assembled of such sort; and they answered me that it was for the commonwealth; and said if they did not so, the commonalty and the church should be destroyed. And I demanded of them how. And they said that no man should bury, nor christen, nor wed, nor have their beast unmarked, but that the

King would have a certain sum of money for every such thing, and the beast unmarked to his own house, which had never been seen.” To this Milner replied that they had been misled, reminded them how gracious the king had been to them, and finally persuaded some three or four hundred to return to their homes.

But that was the extent of his success. No sooner had he reached the market cross and began to read his proclamation than messengers from the castle appeared and commanded him to accompany them to that building. On being conducted into the great hall he began to explain his mission, but was stopped and conveyed to Aske in his own chamber. He found the rebel leader demeaning himself as though he had been “ a great Prince ” and wearing a “ cruel and an inestimable proud countenance.” Once more Milner produced his proclamation, which Aske took and read “ without any reverence,” remarking when he had finished that he would himself give the answer.

That answer did not lack in bravery. The proclamation, he said, should not be read at the market cross, nor anywhere else among his people. All they demanded was permission to see the King himself, the elimination of “ all vile blood ” from his council, and full restitution to the church. Would he, Milner asked, give him that in writing? “ With a great good will,” Aske replied, whereupon

he handed the herald a copy of his address to the people duly signed with his own hand. Remembering that he had not accomplished the errand on which he had been sent, Milner, as a last effort, fell on his knees to Aske and begged to be allowed to read his proclamation at the market cross; he was the King's messenger, he said, and under obligation to discharge his duty. But Aske would not consent; he should have safe conduct from the town, but if he attempted to read the proclamation he would pay the forfeit with his life. "And then he commanded the Lord Darcy to give me two crowns of five shillings to reward, whether I would or no; and then took me by the arm, and brought me forth of the Castle, and there made a proclamation that I should go safe and come safe, wearing the King's coat, in pain of death." That day's business in that "dismal seat" was to have the usual ending for its chief actors, for the following year Aske and Milner were both executed, the former for his rebellion and the latter for bending the knee to the rebel and accepting his bribe.

More than a century later Pontefract Castle figured once again, and for the last time, in a rebellion against a king. During the early days of the war between Charles I and the Parliament the castle was in the hands of the royalists, who successfully withstood several sieges but were obliged to surrender in the March of 1645. For more than three

years the Roundheads were unmolested by their enemies, and so low had the fortunes of the royalists sunk by the summer of 1648 that the garrison under Colonel Cotterel was reduced to about a hundred men. This was the opportunity of the king's party. And the man who availed himself of it was Colonel John Morris, a soldier of fortune who in the earlier stages of the struggle had fought with the Parliament troops.

Morris, however, though an excellent man of war, was no Puritan, consequently when the army was re-modelled and officered by psalm-singing and praying captains he found himself without a command, though he was promised employment in the future. Retiring to his home near Pontefract he meditated avenging himself upon his late comrades, at length deciding to attempt the recapture of Pontefract for the king. Having enlisted the aid of a few kindred spirits he and his little band gained admission to the castle disguised as peasants and quickly obtained possession of the fortress. To garrison it with a force of three hundred men was a matter of little difficulty, while provisions in ample quantity were soon laid in store. Morris had accomplished his revenge, and once more Pontefract became a source of strength to the royalists of Yorkshire.

So much so, indeed, that no less a person than Oliver Cromwell was commissioned to re-capture

the stronghold. His summons to Morris was answered with a cheery defiance, whereupon the famous general sent to London for five hundred barrels of gunpowder, six good battering-rams, demi-cannon, and two or three of the biggest mortar-pieces available. He realized that he had a formidable task in hand, for the castle was victualled for a year, was well watered and one of the "strongest inland garrisons in the kingdom," besides which its defenders were "resolved to endure to the utmost extremity." Perhaps it was well for Cromwell's reputation that he was called away from the siege; in any case its final surrender was no credit to Cromwell's substitute, for it was imminent starvation and not the military skill of his besieger which compelled the gallant Morris to capitulate at the end of March, 1649. Brave to the last, he charged through the ranks of the enemy and got safely away, only to be betrayed some ten days later. Nor was that the end of his adventures; he escaped from his prison and could have eluded his enemies once more had he not refused to leave a companion who had broken his leg while the two were climbing a wall. In fact the doom of "bloody Pomfret" was upon him; there was to be no exemption from that fate which had overtaken those who had figured in the history of that ill-omened fortress.

CHAPTER V

THE PRISONS OF MARY STUART

CARLISLE, BOLTON, TUTBURY AND SHEFFIELD CASTLES

ON that May evening of the year 1568 when Mary Queen of Scots escaped from Lochleven Castle and rode through the night a free woman after more than ten months of captivity, she little divined that in sixteen days her liberty would be at an end. Yet such was to be her fate. From the disastrous battle-field of Langside she fled to the shores of the Solway, where, in the shelter of Dundrennan Abbey, she suddenly resolved to cross to the land ruled by her cousin Elizabeth. A messenger had been dispatched to ask whether the English officials on that farther shore would be willing to receive the Queen of Scots if she were compelled to take refuge in England, but ere that messenger could return she decided to cross the Solway that very day.

News of her arrival was speedily reported to Sir Richard Lowther, who had charge of Carlisle Castle as the deputy of Lord Scrope, the Warden of the West Marches, and he at once set off to greet the fugitive queen and conduct her to Carlisle. There was nothing regal about Mary's state; Lowther reported that her attire was "very mean,"

and that as her treasure "did not much surmount the furniture of her robes" he had volunteered to pay such expenses as she had incurred and provide horses for herself and retinue. In his letter to the court Lowther added that pending instructions from Queen Elizabeth it was his intention to detain the Scottish Queen in the castle at Carlisle.

His resolve was soon put to the test. Among those who had been informed of Mary's arrival was Thomas Percy, Earl of Northumberland, a noble of pronounced Catholic sympathies, who, as the leading peer of the district, imagined he had the best right to the custody of the Scottish Queen. On reaching Carlisle he, after an interview with Mary, stoutly demanded the delivery of her person, but Lowther as firmly refused, telling the earl that he had already charged himself with her safe custody. Such presumption was well calculated to arouse the fiery anger of a Percy, and Northumberland hotly exclaimed that the Deputy-Warden was "too poor and mean a man" to be worthy of such a charge. Lowther, however, was master of the castle of Carlisle, and the enraged earl was obliged to return home as empty-handed as he came. And a day or two later he received a sharp note from court forbidding him to "meddle with the removing of the Queen of Scots."

Hence instead of becoming the guest of a Catholic noble Mary found herself detained in Carlisle



CARLISLE CASTLE.

Castle. Here, too, she was to remain for nearly two months, awaiting the issue of her various messages to Elizabeth. But ere many days had passed she must have begun to realize that she had only exchanged a Scottish for an English prison. For eight days after she reached Carlisle there arrived at the castle two express messengers from the Queen of England, Lord Scrope and Sir Francis Knollys, whose conversation was not so comforting as she had anticipated. Having written several piteous letters to her cousin, Mary had expected that Elizabeth would allow her to be immediately escorted to her court, a conviction which accounted, no doubt, for her action in receiving Scrope and Knollys in her presence-chamber, where, as she thought, all her friends would hear how her sister of England had determined to aid her against her rebels. But she was speedily undeceived. The two messengers spoke in so serious a strain that she interrupted their story and took them into the privacy of her bedroom to hear its conclusion. There she was told that the Queen of England was grieved that she could not admit her sister to her presence "by reason of the great slander of murder whereof she was not yet purged." Thus had the haunting spectre of Kirk o' Field followed Mary to English soil; until she could prove that she had no share in her husband's death her path back to her throne was to be barred by that grim shadow.

If in those early days Mary Stuart had insisted upon being allowed to return to Scotland it is probable that no stout objection would have been made, for Elizabeth had not then finally decided to hold her as a prisoner. And, on the other hand, if her friends had made a serious attempt at rescue it is difficult to see how they could have failed. The truth was that Mary was not anxious to return to Scotland just then and run the risk of re-capture by her enemies; later, when the danger would have been less, it was too late. She was at that moment an uninvited guest, yet none the less surely she had begun that captivity which was to last nearly nineteen years and end but with her death.

Scrope and Knollys were uneasily conscious that it would not be difficult for their charge to escape from Carlisle Castle. The window of her private chamber looked towards Scotland; its bars might be easily filed, and then, "with devices of towels," a woman of her "agility and spirit" could soon escape, "being so near the border." It is true a watch was set on that chamber, both beneath the window that looked toward Scotland and under the other window that commanded an orchard, but there were day-time as well as night-time dangers to be considered. One day she alarmed Scrope and Knollys by insisting upon watching her attendants play football for a couple of hours on a playing-green outside the castle; and, on another occasion,

she went hare-hunting and galloped so fast that they were in momentary dread of a rescue by her friends from over the border. To make matters worse, numerous Catholic gentlemen of England resorted to her little court at Carlisle and were won to her cause by her fascinating manners.

Even Knollys, stout Puritan though he was and loyal to the core to Elizabeth, was in danger of succumbing to that spell which few men could resist. Some two weeks after his arrival at Carlisle he could not resist penning that eulogy of Mary Stuart which must always take high rank in the anthology of her praise. "This lady and Princess," he wrote to Cecil, "is a notable woman; she seemeth to regard no ceremonious honour besides the acknowledging of her estate regal: she showeth a disposition to speak much, to be bold, to be very pleasant, and to be very familiar. She showeth a great desire to be avenged of her enemies; she showeth a readiness to expose herself to all perils in hope of victory; she delighteth much to hear of hardiness and valiancy, commending by name all approved hardy men of her country, although they be her enemies; and she concealeth no cowardice even in her friends." Well might Knollys wonder what was to be done with such a woman, and if Elizabeth saw that letter it is not difficult to understand why she decided to remove Mary to some abode where there would be less resort to her presence.

At first Nottingham or Fotheringay castles were suggested as being situated in districts free from the taint of popery, but finally choice was made of Bolton Castle, a fortress belonging to Lord Scrope, standing in a remote part of the Yorkshire valley of Wensleydale. But the next difficulty was the removing of Mary thither. "It is told me," she wrote to Elizabeth, "I am to be removed, and I have said I will not stir." Knollys tried persuasion; it was Elizabeth's wish, he said, to have her cousin nearer her, and to provide her a better abode than that "rude and inconvenient place." Mary, however, was not to be so cajoled; unless she were compelled, she rejoined, she would not remove one whit further into England. How Knollys eventually overcame the difficulty may be inferred from his letter to Cecil. "Surely if I should declare the difficulties that we have passed, before we could get her to remove, instead of a letter I should write a story and that somewhat tragical! But this I must say for her, that after she did see that neither her stout threatenings, nor her exclamations, nor her lamentations, could dissuade us from our preparation and constant seeming to have authority and determination to remove her, then like a very wise woman she sought to understand, whether if she did remove, she might send some of her noblemen into Scotland to confer with her party there." By the fifteenth of July, then, Mary had reached Bolton



BOLTON CASTLE.

Castle, the second of those numerous strongholds associated with her captivity in England.

Nearly three days were spent on the journey, though only some fifty miles as the crow flies, halts for the night being made at Lowther Castle and Wharton Hall, Bolton being reached just after sunset on the third day. Mary, who was never in better spirits than when on horseback, seems to have enjoyed the journey through Cumberland, Westmorland and into Yorkshire, for Knollys reported that she had been very quiet and tractable and "void of displeasing countenance." That custodian was greatly relieved when he was able to announce that his charge was safely in Bolton Castle. "This house," he assured Cecil, "appears very strong, very fair and stately, after the old manner of building, and is the highest walled house I have seen, with but one entrance. Half the number of soldiers may better watch than the whole could do at Carlisle." Converted from a manor house into an embattled fortress in the late fourteenth century, Bolton Castle, of which considerable remains yet exist, was fully entitled to Knollys' praise of its strength, while his eulogy of its beauty was anticipated by Leland, who described it as the fairest castle in the Richmond district of Yorkshire.

Here Mary was to remain some seven months, not unhappily in the main. Before she left Carlisle her brother, the Earl of Moray, had sent her three chests

of her apparel, but much was yet lacking, which she had left behind at Lochleven. The missing articles duly reached her at Bolton, and the fact that they filled five carts and, in addition, were burden enough for four pack-horses would suggest that she had not lacked luxuries in her Scottish prison. Nor did she fare worse at Bolton. On the contrary, she was waited upon with fully as much state as when she had been a free queen, with the additional advantage of not paying her own expenses. She was very merry, Knollys reported, and hunted and passed her time daily in pleasant manner. Six more cart-loads of her belongings had reached her from Scotland, among them being a cloth of state which she had had set up in the great chamber of the castle. Nevertheless the tradition of the Bolton countryside credits her with having made at least one attempt to escape, for not only is the visitor shown the window from which she was let down, but a narrow ravine in which she was recaptured bears to this day the name of "The Queen's Gap." Perhaps that was the attempt to which Knollys referred when he wrote: "Touching the practises for her stealing away: though I believe she never assented, knowing how hard it is for her to escape, yet I mean to send for the other fifty of Captain Read's band to return hither shortly."

So long as the summer lasted, Mary's sojourn at Bolton cannot have been other than enjoyable; she

had ample liberty to ride hunting and hawking, her retinue included her favourite servants and many of her best friends, and Knollys helped her to pass her leisure hours by teaching her to write English. With the advent of winter, however, bringing "mountain country weather" which soon grew "sharp and boisterous," she must have begun to realize that she was really a prisoner once more. Not that she restricted her hunting as the weather grew cooler; whenever it was dry overhead she rode after the hare be the wind never so blustering, and often rode so far that her escort was increased and more fully armed; but that with the shortening of the days there came the news of the failure of that conference at York, which she had hoped would have had issue in her restoration to her throne.

And the failure of that conference also resulted in Elizabeth adopting a more definite policy as to the future of her uninvited guest. As she was not to be restored to her throne, diplomacy dictated that she should be removed still further from the borders of that country where her cause had divided the nation into two bitterly hostile parties. As early as November, then, the question of her future abode began to be debated, but it was not until February of 1569 that the actual removal to Tutbury took place. That castle on the borders of Staffordshire was decided upon because it was one of the

residences of the Earl of Shrewsbury, to whose custody Elizabeth had resolved to consign her cousin of Scotland.

In the early days of his appointment the earl regarded Elizabeth's choice as a high honour; "now it is certain," he wrote to his wife in high glee, "the Scots queen comes to Tutbury to my charge." He might have written in a different strain could he have foreseen that his guardianship was to last for sixteen years and cost him a small fortune. Meanwhile, in happy ignorance of that fate, he counted himself a fortunate man to receive so high a token of Elizabeth's confidence.

\Some weeks went by, however, before Mary was conducted to his castle. It seems there was a difficulty in providing sufficient horses for her escort and the transport of her belongings, besides which it was thought necessary to enlist the services of various gentlemen to accompany her on her journey lest an attempt at rescue should be made. And to avoid a repetition of the scene which had marked her removal from Carlisle, the English queen wrote that as she disliked Bolton she had prepared for her another place "more honourable and agreeable." On the same day on which Elizabeth wrote those words orders had been given to the wardrobe keepers of the Tower of London to dispatch certain furniture from thence to Tutbury Castle. The inventory shows that the articles sent included nineteen

pieces of tapestry, four large and twelve small Turkey carpets, several pairs of curtains, numerous chairs and stools and cushions, and a plentiful supply of beds and bed linen. In addition there was provided a supply of plate for Mary's use, basons and ewers, salt-cellars, flagons, bowls, trenches, and dishes and spoons. To these must be added a lengthy list of kitchen and table utensils and chamber-hangings and bedding which the Countess of Shrewsbury had caused to be fetched from another of her lord's castles. All these articles in the bulk convey the impression that Tutbury Castle was well appointed for the reception of its distinguished visitor.

Although in a direct line the distance between Bolton and Tutbury was but a hundred miles, the route followed was so devious, the roads were so foul in those winter days, and the rate of progress was so slow that no fewer than ten days were consumed on the journey. Besides, Mary's health was so indifferent as to prevent fast riding, while several of her ladies were even less physically fit for that heavy journey. However, on the fourth of February the cavalcade reached Tutbury without mishap and the Scottish Queen made the acquaintance of the nobleman in whose charge she was to spend so many of her ensuing years.

Shrewsbury had already received his instruction as to how he was to order his conduct. Although,

as Mary was a queen, he was to treat her "with reverence befitting her degree," he was specially warned not to allow her by any pretence to "gain rule over him, or practise for her escape," nor was he to permit any to have intercourse with her save the members of her own retinue. In the event of her being sick and desiring to speak with my Lady Shrewsbury, that was to be permitted, yet the hostess of Tutbury was not to consort with her guest save "very rarely." And the earl was bidden revise the list of Mary's servants with the object of dismissing any who were superfluous.

[From the date of Mary's delivery into his custody Shrewsbury was in constant correspondence with Queen Elizabeth or her chief minister, Cecil, reporting sometimes day by day the incidents of his prisoner's life. A hasty glance through those countless letters shows that in a short time Mary's retinue was reduced from sixty to thirty, that in the main she was "very quiet in outward behaviour," that she rode abroad frequently when the weather was favourable, that she spent much of her time indoors working with her needle, but that, save in the privacy of her own chamber, she was rarely out of Shrewsbury's sight for half an hour at a time. To complete the picture perhaps it should be added that Mary does not seem to have been tidy in her habits, while those of some of her attendants were positively unwholesome. Once, indeed, some of those



TUTBURY CASTLE.

attendants endangered their mistress' health by the "uncleanly order" of their apartments.

But the most vivid glimpse we have of the Scottish queen's life at Tutbury Castle is that given by Nicholas White in a letter to Cecil, written less than a month after her arrival there. White was on a journey to Ireland, but on discovering that a visit to Tutbury would not delay him more than half a day he could not resist the temptation to turn aside to make the acquaintance of its famous prisoner.

As soon as Mary heard of his arrival she came into the presence chamber and asked him how her good sister Elizabeth did. "I told her Grace," White wrote, "that the Queen did very well, saving that she was much concerned at the death of the Lady Knollys. This much past, she heard the English service with a book of the Psalms in English in her hand, and after service fell into talk with me from six to seven o'clock, first excusing her ill English. I asked her how she liked her change of air; she said, if it might have pleased her good sister to let her remain where she was, she would not have removed that time of the year; but she was better contented therewith, because she was come so much nearer her sister, whom she desired to see above all things. I asked her Grace, since the weather did cut her off all exercise abroad, how she passed the time within; she said, that all that day she wrought with her needle, and the diversity of colours making the

work seem less tedious, she continued so long at it till very pain made her give over; and with that laid her hand upon her left side, and complained of an old grief increased there. She also entered into a pretty disputable comparison between carving, painting, and working with the needle, affirming painting in her opinion for the most commendable quality."

\ That White is also to be numbered among the victims of Mary Stuart is obvious from his advise that "very few" should be permitted to have access to her. "For besides," he added, "that she is a goodly personage, she hath withal an alluring grace, a pretty Scottish speech, and a searching wit, clouded with mildness." Of course he added the necessary proviso that she was "not comparable" to his own sovereign, but it is plain that that observation was interjected as a safeguard lest his letter should be shown to Elizabeth. The moral of White was that as his own affection towards his queen had been increased by a sight of her person, so Mary might win untold admirers if resort were allowed to her.

\ Early the next morning ere taking his departure from Tutbury White took a stroll in the grounds and reported that he discovered two soldiers on guard beneath Mary's window. That was a wise precaution on Shrewsbury's part, for careful as he was of his charge she out-watched all the household

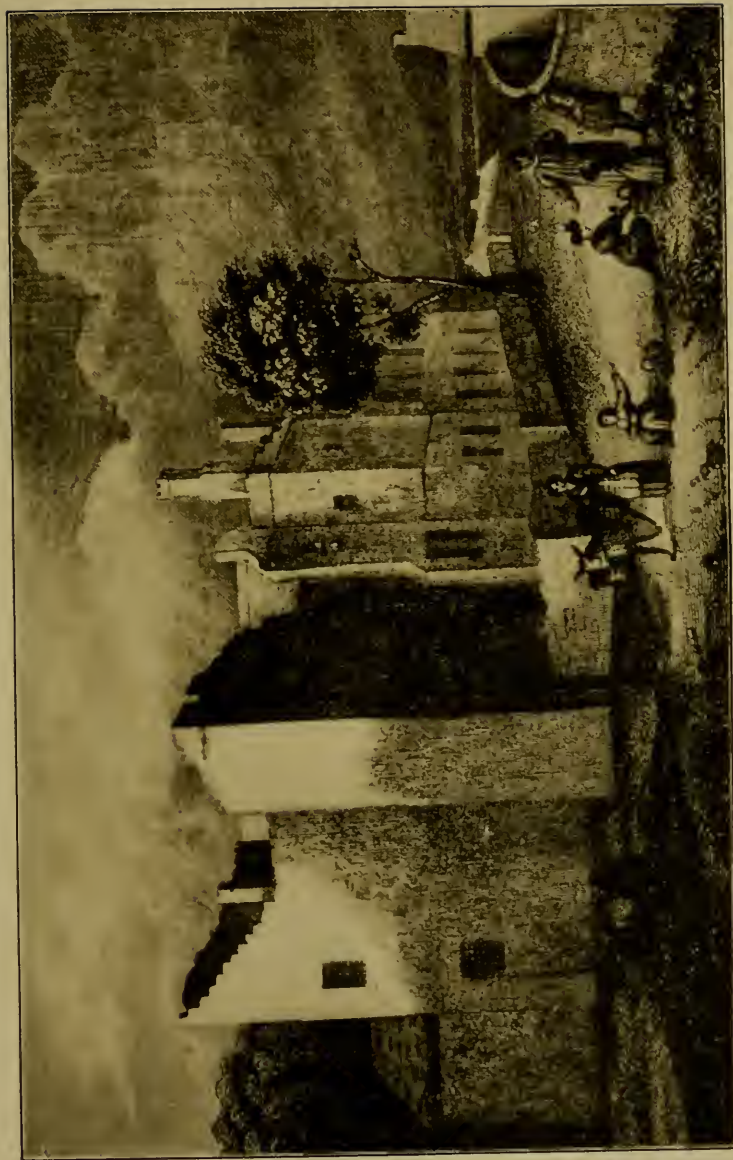
and never went to bed before one o'clock. Later in that year the earl was to realize how much it behoved him to be on the elert, for on a November day of 1569 he received this urgent message from Elizabeth: "Prepare yourself with all the force you can possibly make to convey the Scottish Queen from Tutbury unto Coventry, and there see her safely guarded until we shall signify our further pleasure." Shrewsbury could hardly have been surprised to receive such a command. For several days, indeed, he had been in a state of alarm. He had increased his force by a hundred armed and armoured men, had posted scouts on horseback in a circuit round the castle, had scoured the country six miles round to learn what additional fighters he could call upon in case of need, was entrenching and strengthening the weak places of the fortress, and, above all, notwithstanding that Mary was complaining of sickness and kept her bed, was looking to her as surely as though she were in health and "practised nothing else but for her escape." All this alarm and warlike preparation was occasioned by the fact that the Earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland, the Catholic leaders of the north, had raised the standard of rebellion and were marching on Tutbury to deliver Mary from prison.

But that and all other attempts to set her free ended in utter failure. Immediately on the receipt of Elizabeth's letter Shrewsbury started for Coven-

try with his captive, and there she remained for little more than a month, when, the rebellion being repressed, she was taken back to Tutbury. But during the years that yet remained she was to make the acquaintance of many another castle — Sheffield, and Chartley, and Tixall, and finally the fated Fotheringay. In addition there were to be visits to Wingfield Manor, Chatsworth, and Buxton, but by far the longer period of her captivity was to be spent at Sheffield.

Although there still exist considerable ruins of Bolton and Tutbury and Wingfield and Chartley, all traces of Shrewsbury's castle at Sheffield have long been swept away, while of Fotheringay nothing save the site can be identified. During the years she spent at Sheffield Mary was occasionally removed from the castle to Shrewsbury's manor house in the vicinity, a portion of which still stands, though it is doubtful whether that relic was part of the building used for the Scottish queen's prison.

Shrewsbury removed to Sheffield Castle with his charge in November, 1570, and hardly had they settled in their new quarters than Mary had a severe illness, so severe, indeed, that Elizabeth sent two of her own doctors to attend her. In May of the following year, however, after she had recovered, the earl drew up a new set of regulations for her household and reduced the number of her servants. All who were in any way connected with her personal



FROM AN OLD ENGRAVING

SHEFFIELD MANOR.

wants were ordered to leave her chambers at nine o'clock every night and not return until six the next morning; none were to be allowed to wear a sword save the master of the household; when they went hunting or to the butts only four or five were to be allowed to carry a bow and arrows; none were to ride abroad without special permission; and whenever Mary expressed a desire to walk in the grounds notice was to be given an hour before the time she contemplated going forth.

Yet, judging from the scattered allusions of the letters of the time, these regulations were not at all times stringently observed. A sentimental poet has given a harrowing picture of Mary's close confinement in Sheffield Castle, and assured us that she never saw the sun

"Save when through yon high bars he pour'd a sad,
A broken splendour."

As a matter of fact, save on those occasions when her liberation was the object of an unusually threatening plot, Mary was allowed a large amount of freedom to order her life as she wished. Her household never consisted of less than thirty persons; until the last few tragic days she was allowed to include a Catholic priest among her attendants, and no restriction was placed on her religious observances; wherever she was her chief apartment was used as a royal presence chamber; she had perfect

freedom to conduct a voluminous correspondence, either with her own hand or by way of dictation to her secretary; she rode much, delighting greatly in hunting and hawking and all outdoor pastimes; and for the quieter hours of the day she found pleasant occupation in tending her numerous pets or in reading or needlework. All these facts should be borne in mind by the pilgrim to those castles in which she was confined; they will correct the imaginations of the poets and prevent too large a draught on the wayfarer's store of sympathy. What of pity and lament he has to spare may be fitly reserved for that last scene of all, the shapeless mounds which mark where once stood that castle of Fotheringay in which her life had its tragic end.

CHAPTER VI

A BORDER RENDEZVOUS

NEWCASTLE CASTLE

MOST of the castles described in the preceding chapters, either for their picturesque architecture or the beauty of their situation, would amply reward the pilgrim for his visit were they not also rich in historical associations. Many of them occupy the fairest sites in the districts where they stand, while the object lessons they provide in the evolution of the various styles of building add instruction to æsthetic enjoyment. To the contemplative spirit, at any rate, there is hardly any pleasure comparable to that provided by an hour's meditation among the silent ruins of those ancient buildings which are the most suggestive memorials of mediæval life.

Here and there, however, the wayfarer through England lights upon a structure which, through its unromantic situation and forbidding appearance, taxes to the utmost his ability to revive a picture of its past glory. This is notably the case with that solemn-looking keep of Newcastle-on-Tyne, the successor of that earlier fortress which gave the name of Newcastle to that grimy if flourishing town on the banks of the river Tyne. Its aspect is more that of a prison than a royal fortress; its massive

walls are so be-blackened with the defilements of countless belching chimneys that it is difficult to imagine them as touched with the light of romance. Yet the preservation of that stalwart and lofty tower is largely owing to its situation; had it stood in some quiet countryside instead of in the midst of a thriving city the probabilities are that this, one of the finest specimens of a Norman stronghold, would have fallen to decay many generations ago.

What has to be remembered is that this substantial keep, the chief relic of the great castle that once crowned this high ground overlooking the Tyne, was for many centuries the abode of English kings when they visited their northern dominions, and the symbol of their power in their absence. "Founded by Robert, son of the Conqueror, more firmly established by his brother the Red King, and extended by subsequent monarchs," in the heyday of its glory its massive keep was surrounded by equally massive walls, and while protected on the townward side by a deep moat was on the river side rendered practically impregnable by the steep declivity on whose summit it stood.

Known in the days of the Romans as *Pons Ælii* owing to the bridge erected over the river by Adrian, and in Saxon times as Monkchester, because it was the refuge of ecclesiastics when their convents were ravaged by the Danes, the erection of a new stronghold towards the end of the eleventh cen-



NEWCASTLE - ON - TYNE CASTLE.

tury caused both those names to be abandoned in favour of New Castle, whence the modern form of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. The present keep, however, is not a survival of that building; although there is not perfect agreement among the authorities, this relic may be safely assigned to the closing decade of the twelfth century, some experts, indeed, attributing its erection to Henry II between 1172 and 1177. As most of the subsequent additions have long disappeared the visitor is not called upon to perplex himself with further chronology.

For a more perfect appreciation of the part this fortress has played in English history it must be recalled that the county in which it stands, Northumberland, was a debatable land for many generations. It was, in brief, a buffer county, a veritable Tom-Tiddler's ground between the English and Scots. In crediting William Rufus with the building of a wall round the town, the old chronicler Hardyng expressly states that the king's purpose was to defend the place against the Scots, while the "castel of the Newe Castell" was reared "against the Scots the country to defend." Hence for many generations the place was a frontier settlement, sharing in the constant feuds between the two countries and was frequently chosen as a rendezvous for the gathering of English armies or interviews between the rival kings. All this was naturally to the enrichment of the historical associations of the cas-

tle. It accounts, too, for that hardness of character which distinguishes the Northumbrian folk, for although Camden thought the rough and barren nature of the county had much to do with "hardening the very carcasses of its inhabitants," he also realized that the Scots had rendered them "yet more hardy" by constant raids into their territory.

Only once did William the Conqueror pass this way, on his expedition to Scotland in 1072; but his son Robert was here seven years later, and, as a barrier against the Scots, founded that castle which changed the name of the town. Towards the end of that century the fortress was seized and garrisoned by Robert de Mowbray, Earl of Northumberland, who was a leader of the conspiracy to dethrone William Rufus. That rebellion was the occasion of a visit from the Red King himself, who, having gathered together a large force of mercenaries, hastened north and laid siege to the fortress in person. After the death of Henry I the castle was captured by King David of Scotland, a feat which drew King Stephen hither with a considerable army. But a truce was arranged between the two monarchs, Stephen agreeing to cede Northumberland to the Scottish king, who thereafter frequently held his court at Newcastle.

If these are somewhat intangible memories, lacking in picturesque details, the same can hardly be said of those associations of the castle which belong

to the following century. The problem as to whether Northumberland belonged to England or Scotland was still unsolved in 1237, at which date Alexander II of Scotland and Henry III of England had a friendly meeting in the castle by the Tyne. But it is when we come to the time of Edward I that the royal traditions of Newcastle increase in interest and volume. The accident of a failure in the succession to the throne of the northern kingdom resulted in the English monarch being invited to decide between the numerous claimants for the Scottish crown, the upshot of which was that Edward seized a welcome opportunity to assert a claim to be over-lord of Scotland. It will be recalled that he gave his decision in favour of John Baliol, who, after he had been duly enthroned at Scone, was called upon to repeat the homage which he had already rendered to the English monarch. This ceremony, which to the Scottish patriot represents the utmost degradation his country ever suffered, was appointed to take place in Newcastle Castle, where Edward celebrated his Christmas of the year 1292. On the day following Christmas, then, the new King of Scots made his appearance in the great hall of the fortress, and there performed the homage which stamped him as the vassal of the King of England.

But all this was so little to the liking of the independent Scots that Baliol quickly discovered the thorny lining of his crown. Although he had drawn

such an envied prize, the result was, as Hill Burton points out, to plunge him into a sea of troubles. "It was plain from the first that his people would not bear the rule of a servant of Edward. . . . He was thwarted in his selection of officers, and had to struggle with all the difficulties which subordinates can throw in the path of an unwelcome master." The consequence was that rebellion soon broke out in Scotland, and Edward, who fondly imagined he had settled the affairs of that country, was obliged to take the field to enforce his claim of over-lordship.

Hence on several occasions during the last years of his life he was often at Newcastle, either when setting out on an expedition or when returning. Hither he came in the spring of 1300, accompanied by his new queen, Marguerite, a maiden of twenty-one, and thirty years his junior, and in June of the following year he was back again at the head of an army designed for the invasion of Scotland. The old records show that on this second visit he made many offerings to a neighbouring religious house, one sum of seven shillings being a thank-offering for "the good news which he heard from Scotland." Again, in the May of 1303, the indomitable king was once more at Newcastle with his queen, leaving her, however, to the care of the prior of Tynemouth when he began his march over the border.

While the Newcastle traditions of Edward I redound to his fame as a soldier, and were associated

either with his march toward or return from victory, those of his son Edward II are fully in harmony with the failure he made of his career as a king and a general. Almost the first visit he paid to the town was as a refugee from his angry barons. As previous chapters have shown, all the efforts of those lords to separate him from his worthless favourite Piers Gaveston had been in vain, and now, in the spring of 1312, he had to fly to this stronghold from the revolt led by the Earl of Lancaster. Of course the wretched Gaveston bore him company, and the king's accounts for this period show how generous he was with his rewards to the doctors who attended upon the favourite for some ailment or other. Shortly after his arrival Edward commanded the Bishop of Durham to provide stores for the castle, his demands including six hundred quarters of corn, eight hundred quarters of malt, one thousand quarters of oats, two hundred fat animals, five hundred sheep, and two hundred pigs! He evidently expected a long sojourn in the fortress, but in a couple of weeks the news of the approach of the Earl of Lancaster sent him flying again, and this time in such haste that Gaveston's baggage, containing many jewels of great value, was left behind as spoil for the rebels.

Hardly less ignominious is the memory of Edward's next visit to his Tyneside castle, which took place in the early summer of 1314. Once more a

huge army had been summoned to take the field against Scotland, the result of which was the gathering here and at Berwick of a hundred thousand men, forty thousand of whom were mounted. But if Edward indulged any anticipations of repeating his father's prowess against the Scot, he was swiftly undeceived, for in less than a month he was back at Newcastle again, with the shame of the defeat of Bannockburn for ever attached to his name.

In truth it is not until Edward II had been deposed from a throne he disgraced and his valiant son Edward III had succeeded to the kingship that an English patriot can take any pride in the fourteenth-century royal traditions of Newcastle. One of the most stately of the visits of Edward III was that he paid during the Whitsuntide of 1334, when a special meeting between the kings of the two countries was arranged. Another Baliol occupied the throne of Scotland, but he cared as little for the rights of the land he ruled as his father had done; hence when he was summoned to Newcastle to pay homage to the king of England he not only raised no objection but also surrendered large tracts of Scottish territory to his over-lord. That the ceremony of homage might be the more impressive it was performed in the presence of a great gathering of the lords and commons of both countries.

Nor was that the only result of Edward's Whitsuntide visit to his city by the Tyne. It appears

that for some years little attention had been paid to the upkeep of his castle and the repair of the walls of the town. The latter the king ordered to be strengthened at his own expense; concerning the former he gave instructions for an examination to be made and the necessary renovations carried out. The inspection of the building revealed many defects, as the lack of shutters for the windows of the king's great hall and the need of re-leading for the roof of the king's private chamber. In the end it was estimated that the needful repairs would cost about a hundred pounds, a considerable sum for that period inasmuch as it has been calculated that a penny of the fourteenth century is of equal value to a shilling of modern currency.

For several years in succession, dating from 1334, Edward III was a constant visitor to Newcastle, generally at the head of an army for the invasion of the northern kingdom. To one of these years, 1342, belongs a feat of arms which approved the reckless bravery of the castle defenders. In the month of June David Bruce of Scotland suddenly appeared before the town with a large force, but the garrison was ready to give a good account of their charge. "The captain," says a record of the time, "was Lord John Nevil of Hornby, a person of great conduct and bravery, who, resolving to give the young king of Scotland a taste of the English valour as soon as might be, commanded two hun-

dred lances to make a sally very early next morning. These dashing suddenly, with great fury, into the Scottish host on that part where the Earl of Murray was, took the earl himself naked in bed, dragged him away naked out of his tent, and so, having slain several of his men, and won much booty, they returned all safe into the town with great joy, and delivered the Earl of Murray prisoner to their captain. This daring enterprise having alarmed the whole camp, the Scots ran like madmen to the barriers of the town, and began a fierce assault, which they continued a great while, with much pertinency. But they gained little and lost much. For there were many good men of war within, who defended themselves with much resolution and discretion, so that the Scots were at last fain to leave off their attack." The lesson was not lost on the Scottish king; deeming it dangerous to dally in the neighbourhood of such daring spirits he withdrew his army to try his fortune elsewhere.

Four years later he was back again. Learning that the valiant king of England was absent on a campaign in France, King David seems to have imagined that the invasion of the southern kingdom would prove an easy task, but he had not taken account of the warlike spirit of Edward's queen, Philippa of Hainault. As soon as news of the threatened invasion reached her she hastened north to Newcastle to await the assembling of an army.

The nobles and their retainers were not long in obeying Philippa's summons; in Froissart may be read how they "came daily from all parts," and how the Scots, on learning of the assembly, gathered in force around Newcastle, and how King David sent in a message to the effect that if they would come out into the field he would fight with them gladly. "The lords and prelates of England," continues Froissart, "said they were content to adventure their lives with the right and heritage of the king of England their master. Then they all issued out of the town, and were in number a twelve hundred men of arms, three thousand archers, and seven thousand of other with the Welshmen. Then the Scots came and lodged against them near together: then every man was set in order of battle: then the queen came among her men and there was ordained four battles, one to aid another. . . . The queen went from battle to battle desiring them to do their devoir to defend the honour of her lord the king of England, and in the name of God every man to be of good heart and courage, promising them that to her power she would remember them as well or better as though her lord the king were there personally. Then the queen departed from them, recommending them to God and to Saint George." Modern criticism has eliminated Queen Philippa from Froissart's story, but there is no gainsaying the fact that that sally from Newcastle culminated

in the battle of Neville's Cross, the utter defeat of the Scots, and the capture of their king and a great company of his nobles.

Nor should it be forgotten that the fourteenth-century annals of Newcastle connect the story of the fortress by the Tyne with the stirring ballad of "The Battle of Otterbourne." In the late summer of 1388 the turbulent Scots of the border, taking advantage of the divisions among the English consequent upon the weak rule of Richard II, decided upon another invasion. The details of the story are somewhat confused, but, according to the version of the famous ballad, the Earl of Northumberland, otherwise the illustrious Hotspur of border legend, immediately hurried to the castle of Newcastle to await the gathering of his forces. The Scots, with the Earl Douglas at their head, followed fast in his track, and the ballad tells how from without the walls of the town they cried,

"Sir Harry Percy, and thou beist within;
Come to the field, and fight."

No noble, **much** less a Percy, would decline such a challenge, so it was agreed between the two leaders that their forces should meet at Otterbourne. Which side won the victory is disputed to this day, but that Hotspur was merely taken prisoner while Douglas was killed are facts beyond question.

During the fifteenth century several of the kings

of England visited their Tyneside fortress, Henry IV being here with a large army in 1400, and again five years later to repress a rebellion headed by the Earl of Northumberland. Being so far north the stronghold played little part in the Wars of the Roses, though on one occasion Henry fled hither for refuge from the victorious Edward IV. The sovereign who ended the feuds of the rival houses by wedding Edward's daughter, Henry VII, came to Newcastle in the third year of his reign, but with his death, in 1509, there came a long break in the royal traditions of the town. It should be remembered, however, that six years earlier the old castle looked down upon a notable regal procession, for in 1503 the Princess Margaret, eldest daughter of Henry VII, had a triumphant reception here when on her way to wed James IV of Scotland, she being received at the bridge near the fortress by a concourse of nobles, ecclesiastics, town officials and commons, all attired in gorgeous raiment. Choirs of children arrayed in surplices sang "melodious hymns" and played on "instruments of many sorts," while the streets were so gay with bunting and crowded with people "that it was a pleasure for to see." The young bride-elect was not lodged in the castle, but in one of the religious houses of the town, a significant proof that the romantic days of the ancient fortress by the Tyne were ended.

CHAPTER VII

“ NORHAM’S CASTLED STEEP ”

NORHAM CASTLE

As this pilgrimage to the royal castles of England began at the fortress which guards the heights of Dover and in far-off days was the defence of the southern shore from foreign foes, it is fitting that it should end beside that ruined castle which, on the banks of the Tweed, is a memorial of those distant generations when “ Norham’s castled steep ” was a bulwark against the raids of the border Scots. Commanding that pass on the river once known as Ubbanford, and situated but a few miles from Berwick, the possession of Norham was for several centuries stoutly contested by Scots and English, though from the time when a castle was reared on this rocky eminence the fortune of war generally turned in favour of the southerners. There were, it is true, several occasions from the twelfth to the fourteenth century when the Scots captured the fortress, but in no instance were they able to hold it for longer than a few days.

Romantic in its situation and history, it has been the inspiration of many poets, none of whom, however, have been more successful than Sir Walter Scott in investing it with the glamour of the olden



NORHAM CASTLE.

time. That his picture of the fortress shows it in the pensive evening hour adds greatly to the charm of the opening stanzas of “ Marmion.”

“ Day set on Norham’s castled steep,
And Tweed’s fair river, broad and deep,
And Cheviot’s mountains lone:
The battled towers, the donjon keep,
The loophole grates, where captives weep,
The flanking walls that round it sweep,
In yellow lustre shone.
The warriors on the turrets high,
Moving athwart the evening sky,
Seem’d forms of giant height:
Their armour, as it caught the rays,
Flash’d back again the western blaze,
In lines of dazzling light.

“ Saint George’s banner, broad and gay,
Now faded, as the fading ray
Less bright, and less, was flung:
The evening gale had scarce the power
To wave it on the Donjon Tower,
So heavily it hung.
The scouts had parted on their search,
The Castle gates were barr’d;
Above the gloomy portal arch,
Timing his footsteps to a march,
The Warder kept his guard;
Low humming, as he paced along,
Some ancient Border gathering song.”

Such was the aspect of the castle, to the imagination of the Wizard of the North, in the early fifteenth century; such had it appeared, too, for nigh four hundred years. For at the period of Scott’s tale of Flodden Field the fortress by the Tweed

was already a venerable building, its foundation having dated back to the first quarter of the twelfth century.

Two martial prelates were responsible for its erection. In this northern region of the county of Northumberland for many miles along the bank of the Tweed the land was the property of the see of Durham, two of the early bishops of which were notable examples of that blend of churchman and warrior which was a somewhat common type during the reigns of the Norman kings. First on the list came Rannulf Flambard, that bishop-minister of the Red King whose activities as a builder have a lasting memorial in the impressive nave of Durham Cathedral. Not content with rearing that superb church at the seat of his see, nor with renewing the walls of Durham, he also built the first castle on his lands at Norham as a protection against the border Scots. Flambard was so eager a builder that, in the words of his biographer, he "passed from one work to another, reckoning nothing finished unless he had some new project ready." In less than a decade, however, his castle of Norham was seized by King David of Scotland and partially dismantled.

In the second half of the twelfth century, however, the see of Durham was occupied by another castle-building prelate, Hugh de Pudsey by name, who restored the work of his predecessor and reared

that massive keep the ruins of which have survived to this day. A man of enormous wealth and equal ambition, Bishop Pudsey, who was also Earl of Northumberland, surrounded himself with almost kingly state, a worthy predecessor of that martial prelate whose fame is associated with the most notable event in Norham’s history.

That the building as restored by Hugh de Pudsey was a more substantial structure than that erected by Flambard seems a reasonable inference from the fact that it withstood a forty days’ siege by King John when he sought to revenge himself on those Northumbrian lords who had tendered their homage to the king of the Scots. There were other occasions, however, when John Lackland was more successful in gaining an entrance to Norham Castle, for it was within its walls he arranged a treaty with his rival of the northern kingdom, while another time he resided here for a few days preparatory to an invasion of Scotland.

But by far the most famous of the royal traditions of Norham belongs to the last decade of the thirteenth century. In the preceding chapter brief reference was made to that episode in the career of Edward I which gave him the opportunity to claim the over-lordship of Scotland, but as the principal events of that occasion transpired at Norham they need to be described at greater length.

An accident on a March night of 1286 deprived

Scotland of its king. Though warned by his attendants that the night was too dark and the road too dangerous for the journey he had set himself, Alexander III persisted in galloping forward. And suddenly his horse slipped, pitching its rider over a rock to instant death. The son and daughter of the king had died before that fatal night, the latter, however, leaving a daughter now three years old. That infant was the only direct heir to the Scottish throne, but four years later, while on her voyage to Scotland to be betrothed to the son of Edward I, she too was claimed by death. It was at this juncture that one of the guardians of Scotland appealed to the English king for his assistance in selecting a ruler for the monarch-less land. Edward at once consented to a proposal which afforded him so excellent an opportunity to enforce his claim of overlordship, and at once issued orders to his barons to meet him at Norham Castle on the third of June, 1291. And, at the same time, he invited the nobles and prelates of Scotland to join him in a conference at the same place some twenty days earlier.

On the third of May, then, this castle by the Tweed was the scene of a notable assembly. The leading Scottish lords and prelates accepted Edward's invitation, and the English king was accompanied by many of his chief nobles and churchmen, prominent among the latter being Antony Bek, that magnificent Bishop of Durham whose ordinary ret-

inue consisted of a hundred and forty knights. The assembly was held in the king’s chamber of the castle, the proceedings being opened by an address from the English monarch, read on his behalf by his chief justice, Roger Brabazon. That address commented in appropriate terms on the perplexing and dangerous situation which the failure of the royal line had created in Scotland, explained that Edward of England had “ travelled from remote parts ” to do justice to such claimants as should appear, but insisted that as a preliminary step it was essential that all present should acknowledge the over-lordship of the English sovereign. “ Wherefore,” were the final words of the address, “ our lord the king, for the due accomplishment of this design, doth require your hearty recognition of his title of Lord Paramount of the kingdom of Scotland.”

Such a climax had not been expected by the Scots; all they could do, however, was to object their ignorance of such a right; as their land was without a king, it was impossible for them to give a definite answer. “ By Holy Edward! ” cried the English monarch, “ whose crown I wear, I will either have my rights recognized, or die in the vindication of them! ” It was known that he had summoned his army to meet him at Norham three weeks later; besides, the castle in which they were met was a suggestive symbol of the power which Edward could

exert against them; hence all the bewildered Scots could do was to plead for a little time to consult the absent nobles and prelates. So three weeks' respite was granted, at the expiry of which Edward would, he knew, be able to enforce his claim by an appeal to arms.

So, three weeks later, another gathering took place in this borderland, but, on that occasion, the assembly was held in a meadow on Scottish soil on the opposite bank of the river. Yet as the scene was dominated by the frowning walls of Norham Castle that adjourned conference belongs of right to the history of the border fortress. In that field beneath the shadow of this romantic pile there appeared no fewer than ten claimants to the vacant throne of Scotland, all of whom, for various reasons, freely agreed to acknowledge Edward as their liege lord and accept his decision as final. All these are sad memories to the Scottish patriot, for they are associated with the most critical period of his country's history and culminated in that homage by John Baliol which he regards as the blackest stain on his national annals.

Indeed there is little in the history of Norham Castle in which the perfervid Scot can rejoice. He cannot but recall that when James IV espoused the cause of the impostor Perkin Warbeck and laid siege to this castle he was held at bay by Bishop Fox of Durham for the space of fifteen days and had to

hurry away when he heard the Earl of Surrey was approaching. The bishop had so strongly fortified and well provisioned the fortress that he would probably have beaten off the Scottish king single-handed. Sixteen years later James was back at Norham again, this time successful in his assault, but successful at a terrible cost. For one of the chief charges against the victim of Flodden Field is that he frittered away his time and provisions by taking this and several other border castles, thus affording the Earl of Surrey ample time in which to assemble the army which inflicted so terrible a defeat on the Scots at Flodden.

There are not many warlike achievements recorded to the credit of Edward II, but one of the few links his name with this stronghold, which he recaptured from the Scots in 1322. But it is in the reign of that weakling monarch that the chroniclers place the feat of arms which is the most romantic of all Norham’s traditions. As told by Leland, this story narrates how in the days when the Scots overran the border and ravaged the marches of Northumberland the castle of Norham was in the custody of one Thomas Gray, to whom there came William Marmion, a brave knight whose lady love had bidden him go to “ the dangerest place in England ” and there win fame for his helmet. Four days after his arrival at Norham a band of Scots from Berwick appeared before the castle. This was Marmion’s

opportunity to approve his valour. "Sir Knight," said Gray, "ye be come hither to fame your helmet: mount upon your horse, and ride like a valiant man to your foes even here at hand, and I forsake God if I rescue not thy body dead or alive or I myself will die for it." With that Marmion dashed into the midst of the Scots single-handed, but though he made a brave fight he was at last unseated and in peril of his life. Then Gray and his garrison sallied forth, scattered the Scots right and left, captured fifty of their horses, and returned triumphantly to the castle with their courageous guest.

Yet it is not that Marmion, but the fictitious Marmion created by the imagination of Scott, that the visitor to Norham Castle mostly remembers. Though silent now, and falling to decay, he can re-picture its walls in that sunset gleam as Lord Marmion rode to the castle gate, can hear the warning blast of the warder's bugle-horn, catch the echo of the lowered draw-bridge, and follow the hero as he passed through the courtyard to the castle-hall. He can see the gallant squires and men-at-arms and yeomen who followed in Marmion's train, and note how minstrels and trumpeters and heralds form a lane for his procession to the dais of the banquet-hall. He becomes, too, a spectator of that welcoming feast, hears the song of the harper, sees the "pasties of doe" burdening the tables and the wassail-bowl passed from hand to hand. And so he

watches until the midnight draught of wine and spices gives the signal for repose, and as he turns away may even catch a faint echo of the footsteps of the guard “ pacing his sober round.” This is no royal legend, it is true, but it is a seemly climax to those regal memories awakened by his pilgrimage over the face of England, for the story of Marmion exhales the atmosphere of the romantic past.

THE END.

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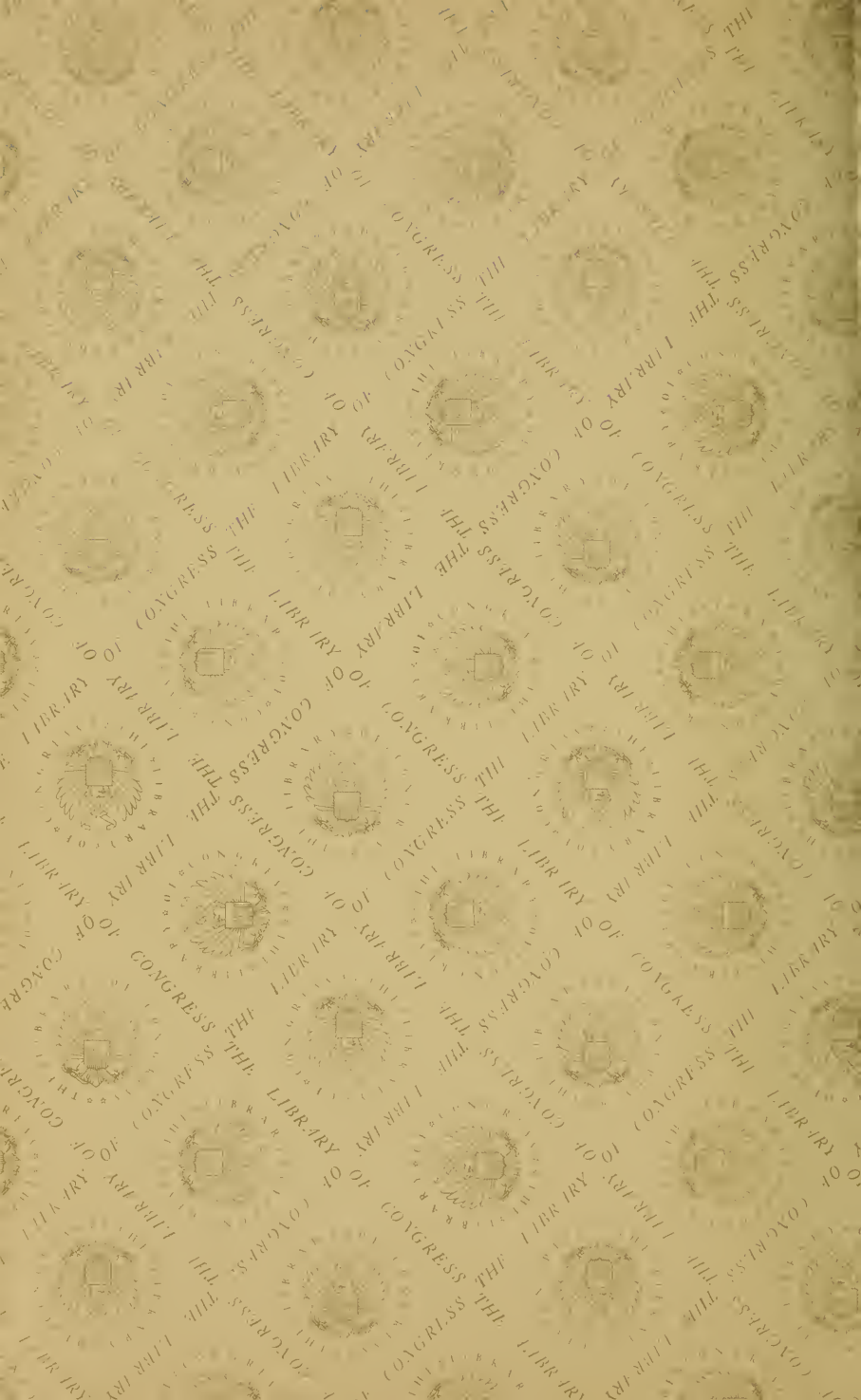
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